Radiance

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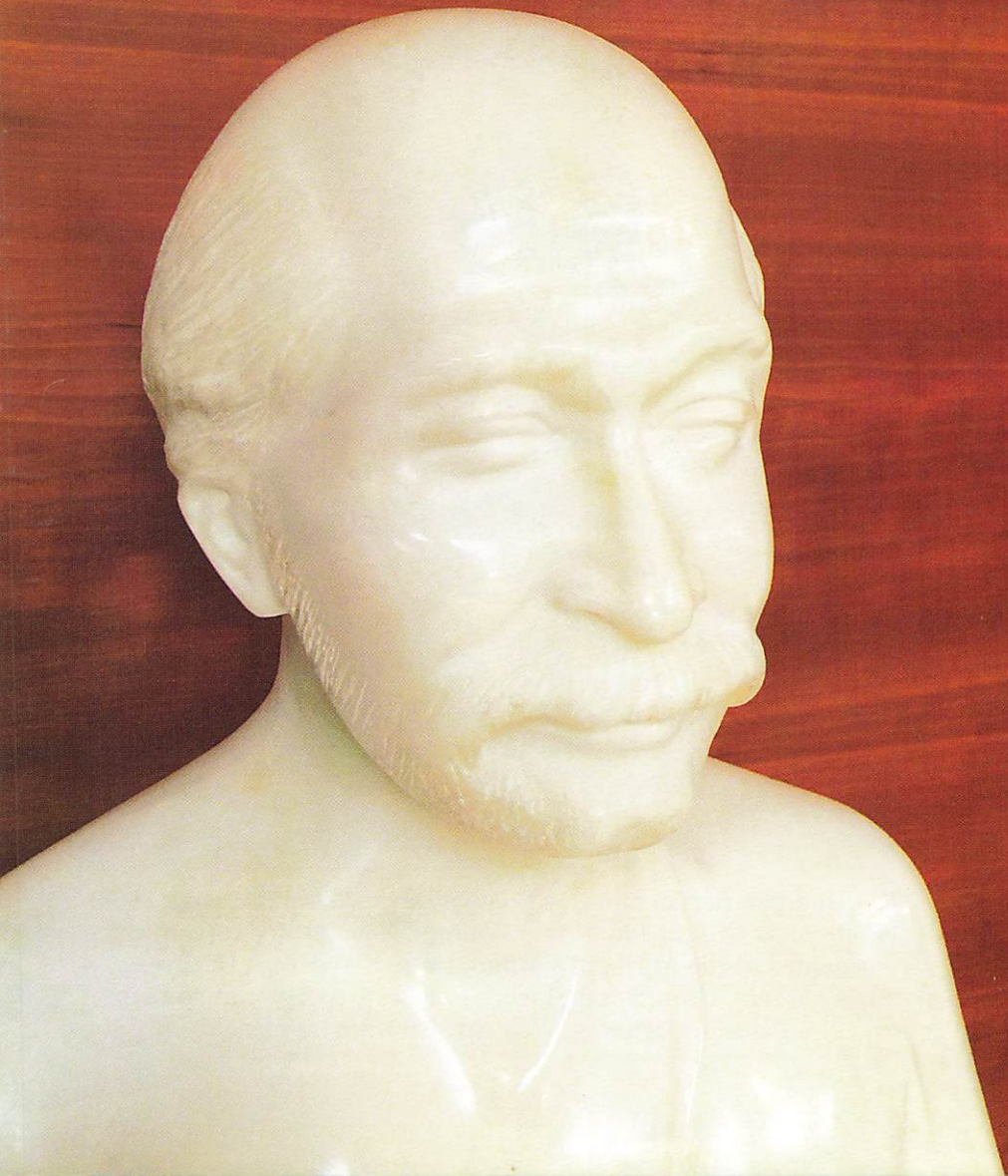
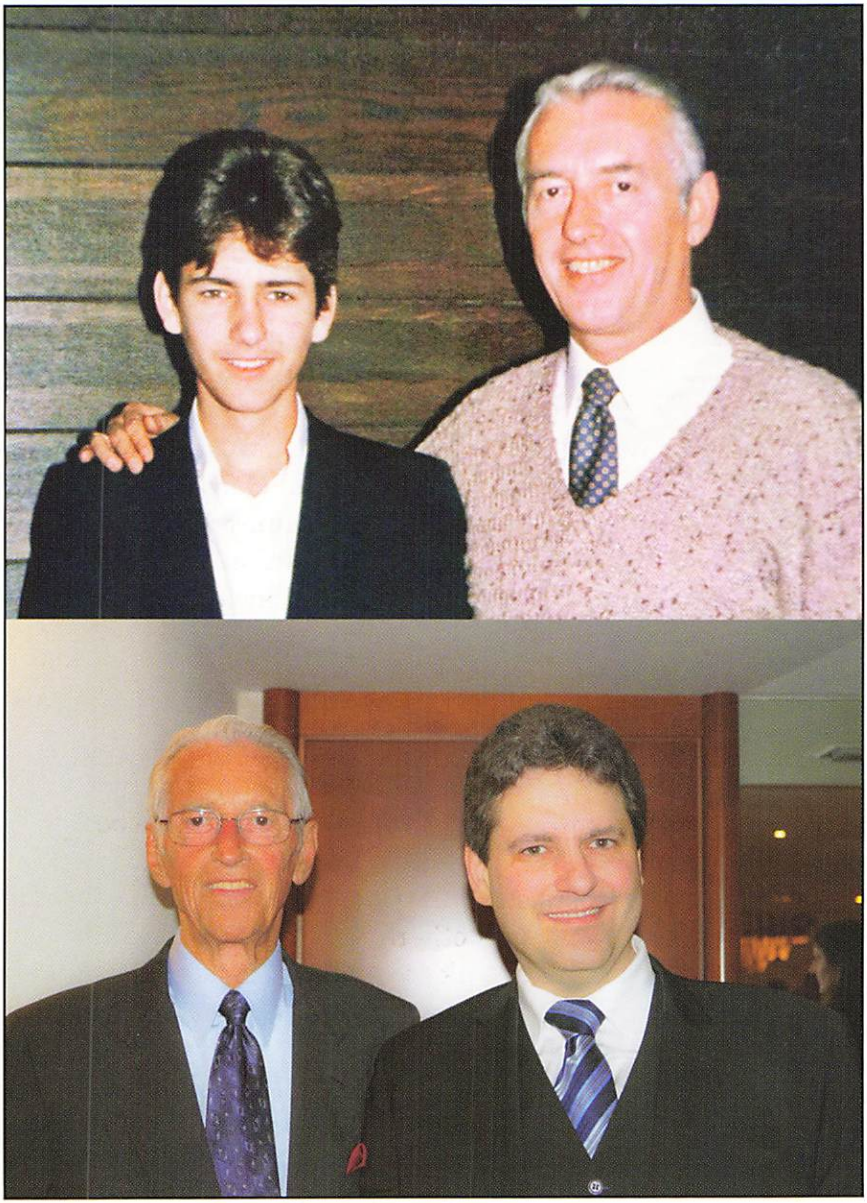




Top: Juergen Reiske and Roy Eugene Davis, Germany, circa 1983. *Bottom:* At CSA headquarters Georgia, Nov. 2014. Juergen was ordained at the April 2014 Milan, Italy, Kriya Yoga Congress. His parents, Harald and Marlies Reiske, are CSA ministers in Passau, Germany. Web site: www.kriya-yoga.de

Let your devotion to Self-realization be like a wood fire that burns steady and long; not like a straw fire that flashes up quickly, then soon dies out.
– Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952)

The Constructive Results of Sincere Aspiration to be Self- and God-Realized Supported by Our Practical, Helpful Actions

Sincere aspiration to be Self- and God-realized can bring forth innate knowledge of our pure essence and ultimate Reality when we are emotionally mature and our intellectual and intuitive powers are highly developed. Most people, however, also need to use helpful actions to calm their mind and clarify their awareness. That is why holistic lifestyle guidelines and meditation methods are taught in our Kriya Yoga tradition.

Knowledge of how to nurture spiritual awakening must be wisely used to be beneficial. Many people who say (or think) they are on a spiritual path don't actually do what they could do to be more conscious and freely functional. They allow acquired habits and whims to influence their thinking, moods, and actions instead of being thoughtfully intentional.

My guru often reminded disciples about the value of being *one hundred percent* committed to the spiritual path by doing what is most useful and persisting until complete Self-realization is permanent. He told me, and others, "If you want to have God's guidance in your life, don't talk too much. Silence is the altar of Spirit." By *God's guidance* he meant *knowing* that emerges from our essence of being.

Excessive, useless talking because of superficial thinking, emotional immaturity, restlessness, or other causes reinforces those conditions and distracts attention from our pure essence.

Think about what you say and how you say it. Do you speak with intention to communicate information that is of value to others or because you are bored, restless, lonely, want others to know how smart you are, or enjoy social interaction? Useless "talking" can include written notes, hand gestures, facial expressions or other body language, e-mails, internet social media, and

mental "self-talk" because of habit, restlessness, preoccupation with self-centered concerns or personal problems, dissatisfaction with existing circumstances, or neurological or other problems.

Excessive, useless talking weakens mental powers and the refined energy that nourishes the immune system. It distracts attention from accomplishing constructive purposes and nurturing spiritual awakening. When I observe people who say they are on a spiritual path talking excessively or mostly about superficial matters, I know they do not nurture their spiritual awareness or meditate effectively.

A young disciple asked our guru, "Why is my mind always restless?" Paramahansaji said, "Because you talk too much!"

Individuals who don't talk too much might do other things that interfere with their spiritual awakening: be preoccupied with trivial or nonuseful ideas or activities; neglect wholesome lifestyle regimens; or be undisciplined, lazy, or satisfied with being ordinary. The major problem is always lack of knowledge and awareness of their real, pure nature. The solution to that problem is to permanently awaken from ordinary (modified) mental states and consciousness to Self-realization.

Before Self-realization emerges or is experienced because of insight or a radical adjustment of viewpoint, we can choose to constructively think, feel, act, and relate to what we observe and to what occurs. We don't have to be "spiritually advanced" to live wisely and responsibly. Wise, responsible living allows spiritual awakening to more easily occur.

Harmful or merely nonuseful habits that we have had for many years can be quickly renounced and replaced with either constructive habits or thoughtful, intentional actions that are always appropriate for every situation. The most constructive mental attitude is "I will do it!" rather than "I can't do it."

Right living and spiritual practice often demand of us our best, dedicated efforts. The Sanskrit word *tapas*, translated as "austerity" (concentrated disciplined thinking and behavior), is from the verb root "to make hot or burn." Doing what is right is sometimes temporarily uncomfortable because acquired habits of thinking, feeling, and behaving that don't contribute to our

well-being have to be changed. Resistance to making necessary changes will be weakened or neutralized when the benefits of constructive mental attitudes, moods, and intentional actions are experienced.

Think, Feel, and Act Like the Immortal Spiritual Being You Really Are

Lack of Self-awareness causes a mistaken sense of self.
Correction of that intellectual error liberates consciousness.
Unwavering knowledge of ultimate Reality removes all
delusions [false ideas] and illusions [flawed perceptions].
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 2:24–26

We can be always inwardly peaceful and avoid delusions and illusions by being fully conscious of our true nature which is pure and changeless. Even if our mind has been conditioned by false ideas and flawed perceptions for many years, when we are reminded that we are spiritual beings we can immediately choose to have constructive mental attitudes and emotions and skillfully accomplish purposes which are of value to us, others, and our environment.

Being informed about our true nature and ultimate Reality is of little value if we are not highly motivated to be Self- and God-realized. Although it is true that some people are not able to fully understand higher realities, many could improve their intellectual and intuitive abilities and experience higher states of consciousness if they were sincerely interested in doing it.

Everyone is not born with exceptional mental abilities or functional skills, but abilities and skills can be improved and capacities to apprehend transcendent realities can be enlarged.

When philosophical concepts are not clearly understood or our meditation experiences are not satisfying, the problem is not bad karma or adverse planetary influences—we only need to improve our ability to learn and to acquire the skills that can enable us to meditate effectively. We need to be firmly resolved to bring forth and effectively use our innate powers.

Allow Grace to Effortlessly Complete Your Spiritual Enlightenment

We cannot cause spiritual enlightenment to occur. If that were possible, many sincere spiritual aspirants would now be enlightened. We *can* live right, improve our understanding of higher realities, nurture spiritual awareness, and *allow* innate Self-knowledge to be effortlessly revealed. Such revelations are said to be due to grace because they are not earned or produced by personal effort. They occur when our innate inclination to have our consciousness restored to wholeness is not suppressed by mental restlessness or emotional conflicts, or misdirected by allowing our attention and energies to be too outward.

Spontaneous awakening usually occurs when the mind is calm and awareness is very clear. Sometimes, during a "flash of insight," a glimpse of vast regions of space, subtle realms, and knowledge of cosmic processes may be had. At other times there may be a vivid experience of transcendent aloneness, which when it first occurs is immediately familiar and satisfying.

When we can be superconscious with only a small or weak awareness of individual self-identity remaining, letting go of it can let our pure essence be experienced. We do not "become" enlightened; we can only awaken to what we have always been. Because this fact is not always understood, many people often struggle for many years using a variety of practices, hoping that something they do might be helpful.

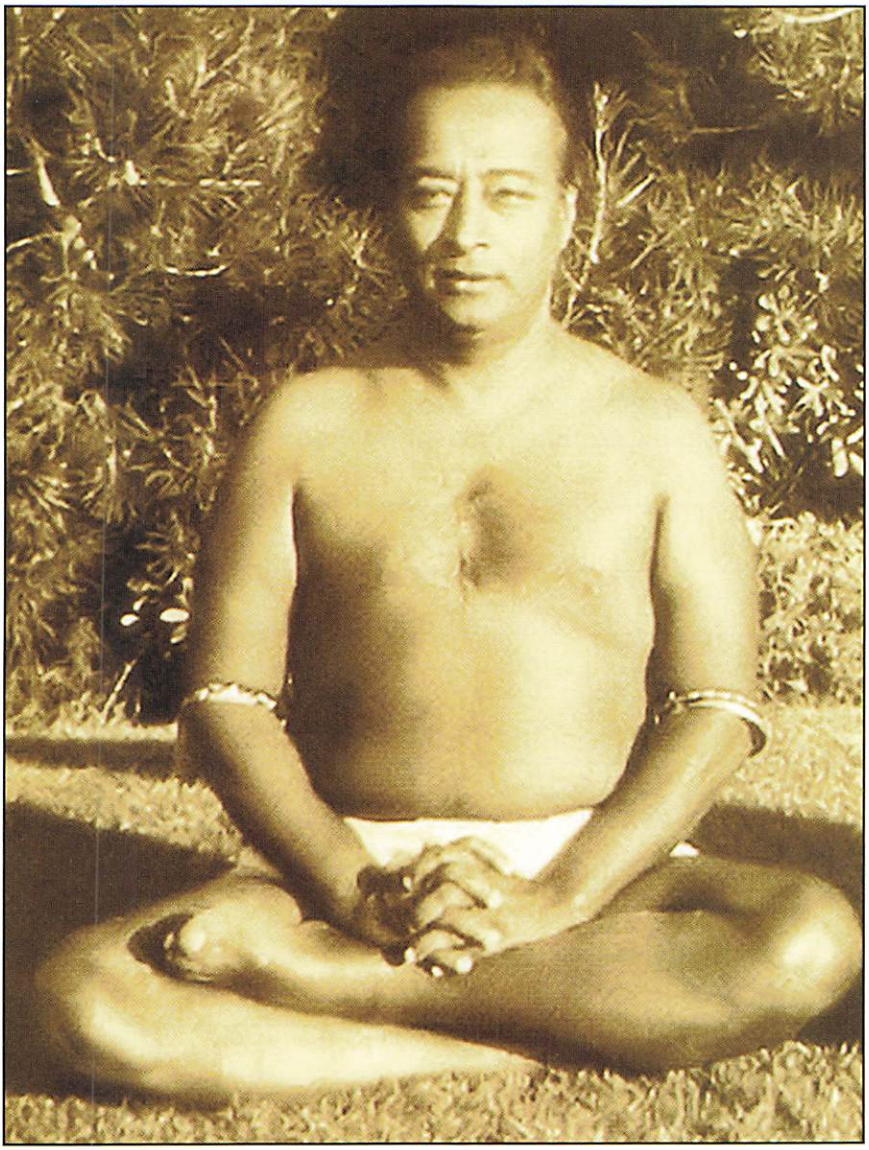
Some characteristics we should have and demonstrate are described in the Bhagavad Gita in first three verses of chapter sixteen:

Fearlessness, purity of intentions, abiding in yoga [samadhi], charitable giving, self-control, study of sacred texts, harmlessness, truthfulness, absence of anger, renunciation, serenity, compassion for all beings, absence of cravings, gentleness, modesty, steadiness, forgiveness, fortitude, freedom from pride.

Kriyas As Intensive (Concentrated) Right Endeavors

If you intend to be spiritually enlightened in your current incarnation, write a clearly defined affirmation that declares your commitment to your spiritual path.

Write what you are doing (or soon will definitely do) to nurture your spiritual awakening and be Self- and God-realized.



Paramahansa Yogananda, late 1940s

Dialogue

Kriya Yoga Traditions and Practices

Send questions, inquiries, or themes—which may be used in a future issue of this publication—by regular mail or to rd@csa-davis.org

Although for several years I have read about yoga and various spiritual practices, I was initiated a few weeks ago. What do you recommend that I now do?

Maintain a wholesome, responsible lifestyle; read reliable (not opinionated or superficial) information to improve your understanding of higher realities; meditate daily to cultivate superconsciousness. Don't talk about spiritual practices or your experiences. Be more inward to nurture Self-awareness and your relationship with the Infinite. Be consistently steadfast on your spiritual path for many years or as many as may be needed to awaken to Self-realization. Don't allow anything that others say or do, personal challenges or difficulties, or local, national, or international events to disturb your peace of mind or interfere with your spiritual practices.

A major obstacle to spiritual growth is thinking and behaving like an ordinary self-conscious person as though spiritual aspirations were of secondary importance.

In some Yoga-Sutra commentaries the word chitta *in the second sutra in the first chapter is often defined as "mind." Isn't it more than a mind?*

Yes, that Sanskrit word is use to indicate an individualized unit of pure consciousness which is aware and has an intellect, a mind, and a mistaken sense of self-identity. The changes and movements that distort awareness and interfere with concentration occur in that field of awareness: its intellect, mind, and mistaken sense of self. Even when the mind is calm, changes can be observed when they occur in our awareness and attention is not yet focused. When all aspects of awareness are still, Self-knowing can be had.

Before the mind is calmed, it is possible to detach attention and awareness from it and the confined, mistaken sense of self--identity. Until that can be easily done, forms of meditation that calm the mind and focus attention can be used. Kriya pranayama can quickly internalize attention. Also, observing inhalation and exhalation until breathing slows and momentary pauses between exhalation and inhalation occur can be helpful. During those pauses, when streams of thoughts momentarily stop, pure awareness can be experienced.

With knowledge of our true nature, higher realities, and of methods that can be used to calm the mind and clarify our awareness, supported by the currents of grace that pervade our kriya yoga tradition, we can have the constructive results we want to have. We should remember that we are not alone in the universe. Spiritually enlightened gurus in our lineage and other illumined souls in the universe constantly radiate pure consciousness and good will which we can receive.

Even without the good will and blessings of Self-realized teachers and saints, we will be spiritually enlightened because, as units of the pure essence of ultimate Reality, we will eventually awaken from modified (conditioned, blurred, limited) states of consciousness.

Self-realization is the restoration of our consciousness to its original purity. Conditions which obscure perceptions of our true nature and ultimate Reality are temporary. Our changeless, pure essence endures.

It is helpful to aspire to be fully conscious and to *believe* that you will soon be spiritually enlightened. Some initiates are like traditional Christians who say that "heaven" is their ultimate destination, but don't always think and live like they should think and live to prepare for it.

Spiritual enlightenment should not be thought of as a state of consciousness to be experienced in the far distant future or just before, during, or after physical demise. We should want to be spiritually enlightened as soon as possible and think and live in accord with that fervent aspiration. Being units of pure consciousness, with a mind that is a part of cosmic mind, what we

can imagine as being true can quickly be actualized.

To prepare to be spiritually enlightened, control your mental attitude, emotions, states of consciousness, and actions to be always optimistic, peaceful, aware of your pure essence and relationship with the Infinite, and able to live skillfully and effectively. Meditative superconsciousness and transcendence can then be more easily experienced.

Being self-disciplined allows spiritual awakening to naturally occur and spiritual awakening makes self-discipline easier. Paramahansa Yogananda was pleased when his disciples were able to harmoniously blend "practicality with spirituality."

Principles of cause and effect that produce mundane events in the physical realm are just as "spiritual" as those that influence the trends of evolution and subtle changes that occur in our mind and consciousness as our awareness is clarified to the stage of liberation. (A Sanskrit word for liberation is *mukta*: thus the monastic name of some Indian swamis, *Muktananda*, "freedom-bliss"). *Bliss* is "pure joyousness of existence-being," not an emotion, extreme euphoria, or physical sensation.

The Sanskrit word *nirvana*, (blow out, extinguish) is also used to indicate consciousness that has been liberated—freed from all former inhibiting characteristics. The peace that then prevails is uncreated and unsupported by any condition or influence because it is innate to our essence, as the constant peace of the pure essence of ultimate Reality is neither created nor supported by conditions or influences.

At times, I pray to one or more of the gurus in our tradition and feel secure and comforted, and my meditations are usually more satisfying. Is it possible to know if I am really in contact with them or if I only imagine the contact?

The main value of wanting to have mental and spiritual attunement with the purity of the consciousness of our gurus is that our mind can be calmed and our consciousness clarified. Thoughts about them and a sense of contact can help us be more aware of all-pervading ultimate Reality. We do not know where they are in space. During my last personal talk with my guru in

early 1952, a few weeks before he made his transition, he told me: "Whenever you initiate someone into Kriya Yoga, I, or one of the Great Ones [gurus], will be there!" He meant that the influence of enlightened consciousness and creative power expressing through the lineage of gurus would be present.

I sometimes fear the possibility of having a transcendent meditative experience; it seems much different from what I usually experience.

It is normal to be uncertain about unknown circumstances. When transcendence occurs, it will be familiar and satisfying.

Improving your understanding of your true nature will inspire you to want to experience pure, conscious existence and to recognize it when it occurs.

My mind and awareness are often disturbed by restlessness, moods, discontent regarding lack of spiritual awakening, and worry about mundane concerns. How can I avoid or eliminate distractions and meditate effectively?

The two ways to overcome those obstacles to concentration are 1) improve your ability to concentrate on what you choose to contemplate during meditation practice so your attention will be constructively focused; 2) learn to detach your attention from troublesome conditions by choosing to be disinterested in them while you meditate.

To improve your ability to concentrate, be curious about the subtle changes in mental states and in your awareness and use a meditation technique that fully involves your attention, such as prayer, affirmation, mantra, kriya pranayama, or observation of your breathing until your attention is entirely inward.

Don't struggle with or try to suppress troublesome thoughts or feelings; ignore them. Also replace them with mental states and feelings that are satisfying and comfortable. As a spiritual being, you have freedom and ability to choose how to think and feel and where to direct your attention.

When you start to meditate, inhale deeper than usual, then exhale fully and experience the natural pause that occurs until

normal breathing begins. Notice that thoughts and emotions are weak or absent. Proceed to meditate without distractions.

Also, after practicing kriya pranayama, inhale, exhale, and experience the temporary, longer pause the occurs. Then sit in the deep silence.

I don't see light in the spiritual eye. Is it necessary to see it? Is it necessary to experience samadhi with the support of perceptions such as subjective light, sound, or bliss before one can have a transcendent samadhi?

Visual or auditory perceptions are not necessary to have in order to be superconscious. Preliminary samadhi (oneness) experiences during which attention and awareness are merged with what was formerly perceived don't have to be experienced before having transcendent realizations. Some meditators have them because they are habitually inclined to want to identify with something rather than to experience pure consciousness.

Remember the usefulness of knowing your pure essence, the direct experience of which can be had at any moment when you are meditating and at other times. Many spiritual aspirants mistakenly think that awakening to Self-realization can only occur while they meditate. Self-realization can occur anytime during a moment of sudden insight. Or it can gradually emerge as awareness becomes more clear.

You can know that you are becoming more conscious when you notice that you can more easily understand what you read or hear regarding higher realities—when what was formerly obscure is suddenly meaningful.

During my first private talk with Paramahansa Yogananda (December 25, 1949) he instructed me to "think of God all the time." *Thinking of God* is not always thinking *about* ultimate Reality; being aware of it improves comprehension and experience of it. One of the benefits of regular meditation is that it helps us be increasingly Self- and God-conscious so we can constantly have an awareness of our true nature as a unit of the larger Reality.

When I start to meditate, it is sometimes difficult to quickly internalize my attention.

When you are poised in your meditation posture, pray or wish to have a satisfying practice session. Feel an aliveness in your spine as you put your attention in the front and higher region of your brain. If your attention easily turns inward and meditation begins to flow, relax into the experience. Otherwise, practice kriya pranayama several times, then sit in the silence.

When you are aware in the spine and the front and higher regions of the brain, it will be easier to have your attention and awareness detached from external circumstances and mental processes. Even when it is not always easy to be completely inwardly aware, remember that you are an immortal, spiritual being regardless of temporary mundane conditions. Knowing that you are a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality will enable you to control your mental states, emotions, states of consciousness, and behaviors. If you are:

Pessimistic: choose to be optimistic and happy.

Fearful: choose to be self-confident.

Confused: think rationally and be emotionally calm.

Moody: choose to be inspired and cheerfully productive.

Impulsive: choose to be self-controlled.

Inattentive: choose to be alert and focused.

Resentful: choose to forgive and to bless.

Envious: choose to be happy for the good fortune of others.

Inclined to fantasize: control your imagination.

Self-centered and/or possessive: choose to identify with your pure essence and be thoughtfully generous.

Constant mastery of your mental states, emotions, states of consciousness, and behaviors in everyday circumstances will enable you to meditate more effectively.

Kriya yoga practitioners should aspire to be fully conscious and freely functional rather than think they will have to wait for many years to be Self-realized. The furthest extent of realization is available to anyone who has prepared themselves to have the capacity to experience it.

Some truth seekers know about or are already committed to a spiritual path that can enable them to nurture their spiritual awakening until they are Self-realized. Will others who don't yet know about the existence of higher realities or how to realize them eventually be avid truth seekers—or are there other ways for them to eventually be spiritually enlightened?

I think we would be small-minded or perhaps smugly self-righteous if we seriously believed that only the spiritual paths we know about or use are necessary for all of the souls in our universe. We do not know the sequence of events that souls will experience as they awaken to clear levels of Self-knowing.

We should ask: *What* is responsible for the universe and the various forms of life it produced and nurtures? We might then conclude that the Reality which emanates and enlivens the universe is responsible for units of its pure essence.

Lack of Self-knowing results from excessive identification of attention and awareness with a mistaken sense of self-identity and with objective circumstances. When those conditions are corrected, we can be Self-realized.

When knowledge of an object and the object perceived
are absent, that is the only path for a meditator.
By renouncing perceptions and thoughts of objects, the
mind can be illumined. When the mind is illumined,
Self-awareness [alone] remains.
– *The Shandilya Upanishad*

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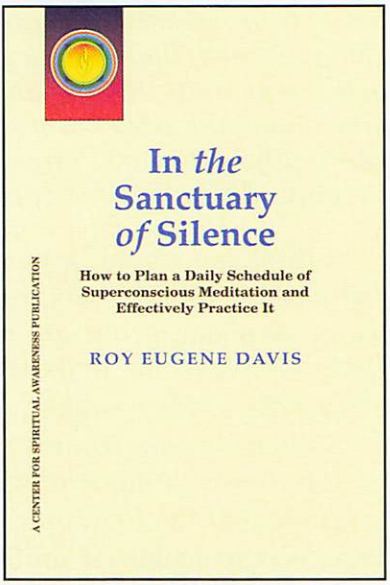
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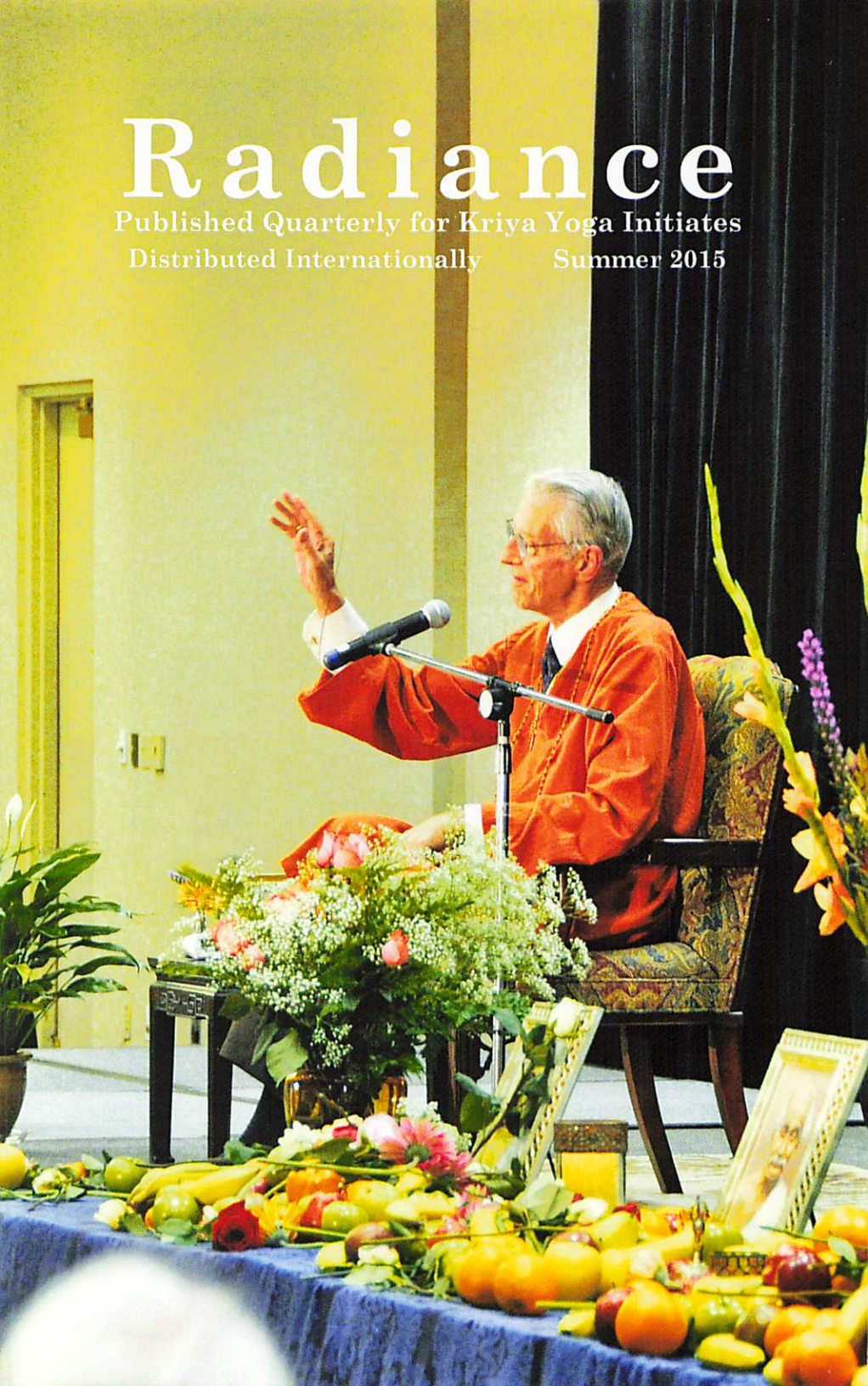

In the CSA meditation hall. *Late 1970s.*

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Spiritual growth can be quickened
by right, concentrated endeavor.
– Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952)

Perceive Accurately; Know Truly; Think Rationally; Act Wisely

If you were accused in a court of law of being a truth seeker or a yogi, would your superior mental states, clear states of consciousness, and ideal behaviors be obvious enough for you to be convicted? Or, are you only talking about Self-realization while dramatizing ordinary human habits of thinking and behavior?

I recently heard a recorded talk that had been presented at a conference by an American yoga teacher. Except for several simplistic comments about reincarnation, karma, discipleship, devotion, and prayer, he sounded a like Sunday School teacher talking to a group of children.

A few months ago I talked with a woman at one of our meditation retreats. When I asked about her daily meditation routine, she said she didn't meditate daily, then informed me she had attended a Kriya initiation service that I had conducted in her community several years ago.

We annually examine our mailing list to see if people to whom we send publications donate now and then, attend our retreats or seminars, or in some way indicate a sincere interest in their spiritual well-being. We usually delete 20 to 30 percent of the names and addresses of those who once enthusiastically said that "these teachings" were very important to them.

Now and then I receive a telephone call or an e-mail from a person who is "sincerely" interested in Kriya Yoga practices. As we talk, I learn that they are more interested in what various Yoga teachers or organizations, or their spiritual friends, are doing or saying than in intentional living, profound study of higher realities, and superconscious meditation practice.

Most people who are born into our world live here less than one hundred years. The first several years are usually devoted to learning and adapting. During adult years there are duties, family and work obligations, and perhaps a variety of activities

and interests that involve attention and energies. Eight hours of a twenty-four hour day are commonly used for self-care, rest, and sleep. How much of your available time and energy do you devote to Self- and God-remembrance and to bringing forth and actualizing your innate qualities and higher knowledge?

The certain way to most effectively use our available time and energy is to constantly aspire to be spiritually enlightened and think and live in ways that allow our true nature to be Self-revealed in our current incarnation. Thinking and living with right, intentional endeavor is complete spiritual practice that allows ideal results to easily occur.

To adhere to right, intentional thinking and living is to concentrate attention on essential matters while disregarding what is not essential to well-being and spiritual growth.

If this advice seems severe, or unrealistic, an honest review of teachings of saints and sages of various cultures and times will remind us of what is necessary for us to do if we sincerely want to awaken from dreamlike states of consciousness and be freely functional. To have the liberating results we want, we must do what is necessary to have them.

Perceive Accurately and Know Truly

A perception is an awareness of something that is reflected to the mind which records an impression (Sanskrit *samskara*), a memory. Illusions are flawed perceptions which are mistakenly presumed to be accurate. Intend to completely perceive so that information you acquire is accurate. Be attentive to ordinary events and circumstances and fully understand the philosophical principles that you examine.

Don't be intellectually lazy, inclined to believe opinions that others have or satisfied with only partial understanding of your true nature and ultimate Reality. To be spiritually enlightened is to be aware of innate knowledge of higher realities. Before innate knowledge fully emerges, much useful knowledge can be acquired from reliable sources. Mental laws of cause and effect can be known by observing relationships between your mental attitudes and circumstances. Nurture awareness of the one,

omnipresent cosmic mind of which all individualized minds are parts. While using your functional abilities to have life-enhancing desires fulfilled and purposes accomplished, also use imagination and intention to produce and attract fortunate events and circumstances. Use imagination and intention to meditate effectively and to bring forth your innate qualities and higher knowledge. Mentally "see" and feel (be aware of) yourself as being alert, able to easily concentrate, and steadily awakening to Self-realization. Avoid thinking or feeling that you are incompetent, a "slow learner," or have a lot of karma that limits you. Privately identify with spiritually conscious and freely expressive people.

Think Rationally and Act Wisely

Knowing what is important for your total well-being, think rationally. You will be inspired from your pure essence and empowered to act wisely.

We sometimes hear someone say, "I usually know what to do but I don't always do it." Be wisely self-disciplined. The three aspects of your life that require attention are moral, physical, and spiritual.

Moral thinking and behaviors are proper and wholesome.

Physical disciplines include the mental attitudes, emotions, and behaviors that contribute to total well-being.

Spiritual disciplines include what is done to nurture Self-awareness.

Right behaviors are easy when we are highly self-motivated and purposeful. That is why it is important to have meaningful short-term and long-term aims to accomplish. Passive drifting for hours, days, weeks, and months without having worthwhile purposes to fulfill dulls awareness and inclines us to allow subconscious impulses and current events to determine how we think and what we do. To invite spiritual growth, we need to be alert, optimistic, higher purpose-directed, and self-disciplined.

Master Mental States, States of Consciousness, and Behaviors

One of the easiest ways to master mental states, states of consciousness, and behaviors is to adhere to constructive lifestyle routines, beginning with an interlude of alert meditation every day. Early morning meditation affirms dedication to your spiritual path and can help you to be Self-aware and skillfully functional throughout the day.

If you do not yet meditate every day, firmly deciding to do it and following-through with attentive practice will soon produce beneficial changes in many aspects of your life.

Every time you do something with intention, your ability to master your mind, consciousness, and behaviors is improved and the front region of the brain associated with concentration and will power becomes more developed.

The Sanskrit word for the chakra in the front of the brain is *ajna* (command). When you use will power, notice that you concentrate at the place between your eyebrows.

Don't think or say that you cannot control your mind, emotions, or behaviors. As a spiritual being, you can be superior to your mind, emotions, and physical behaviors when you choose to master them. Sufficient sleep, physical and psychological health, good nutrition, optimism, and self-confident purposefulness will make it easier for you to be wisely self-determined.

When you are tired, sleep deprived, physically weak or not feeling well, emotionally disturbed, or mentally confused, then thoughts and moods fluctuate and it is difficult to concentrate and make wise choices. When you are Self- (soul or essence) centered, it is easy to be in control of your mental and emotional states and behaviors.

Personal association and mental and spiritual attunement with self-reliant, spiritually conscious, freely expressive people can also assist you to be self-reliant, more fully conscious, and freely expressive. Frequent association and identification with confused, purposeless, egocentric people may incline you to be like them and to think of limitations as being normal.

Have Liberation of Consciousness as Your Ultimate Aim

When spiritual enlightenment is not yet flawless, there can be episodes of transcendence and occasions when awareness is mixed with erroneous ideas and the mind and senses are stimulated or disturbed by subconscious influences.

If you intend to be liberated—to have your mind and consciousness purified—it will be helpful to know what to do and what to avoid doing to allow your final awakening to occur.

Discard all untrue beliefs and opinions and avoid allowing troublesome subconscious influences to determine your moods, thoughts, behaviors, and responses to events that occur.

Carefully examine what you believe or have accepted as true to discover if it is true. What others believe or say is true is not important to you. What do you know to be true?

Have your mind purified and troublesome subconscious influences weakened and neutralized by daily superconscious meditation, rational thinking, and constructive behaviors.

For some people involved with ordinary circumstances or difficult conditions, being spiritually conscious to the extent of liberation is difficult to imagine. To be occasionally released from painful or oppressive situations would be very satisfying for them even if it was not a permanent solution. Although it can be beneficial to have short-term relief from difficulties, to fervently aspire to be spiritually enlightened can empower us to permanently overcome or transcend difficult situations while we are steadily awakening to Self- and God-realization.

Complete liberation of our consciousness can be permanent when we are not influenced by erroneous ideas, illusions, subconscious conditions, or the three energetic influences (*gunas*) in nature. *Sattva* is purifying and illuminating. *Rajas* is stimulating: it promotes actions and movements. *Tamas* is inertial: it resists change and dulls the intellect, mind, and awareness.

To overcome inertia, perform constructive actions without egocentric involvement. Avoid being attached to all actions and their effects by being selfless. Avoid being attached to episodes of personal happiness and temporary spiritual perceptions by

aspiring to awaken to transcendent realizations which are not supported by objects of perception or mundane conditions.

The devotee who has transcended the gunas and serves me with the yoga of constant devotion, is prepared to awaken in the Absolute.
– *Bhagavad Gita 14:26*

INNER MEANING
One who is no longer influenced by the gunas and is stable in the samadhi of Self-realization, is prepared for the final, transcendent stage of awakening.

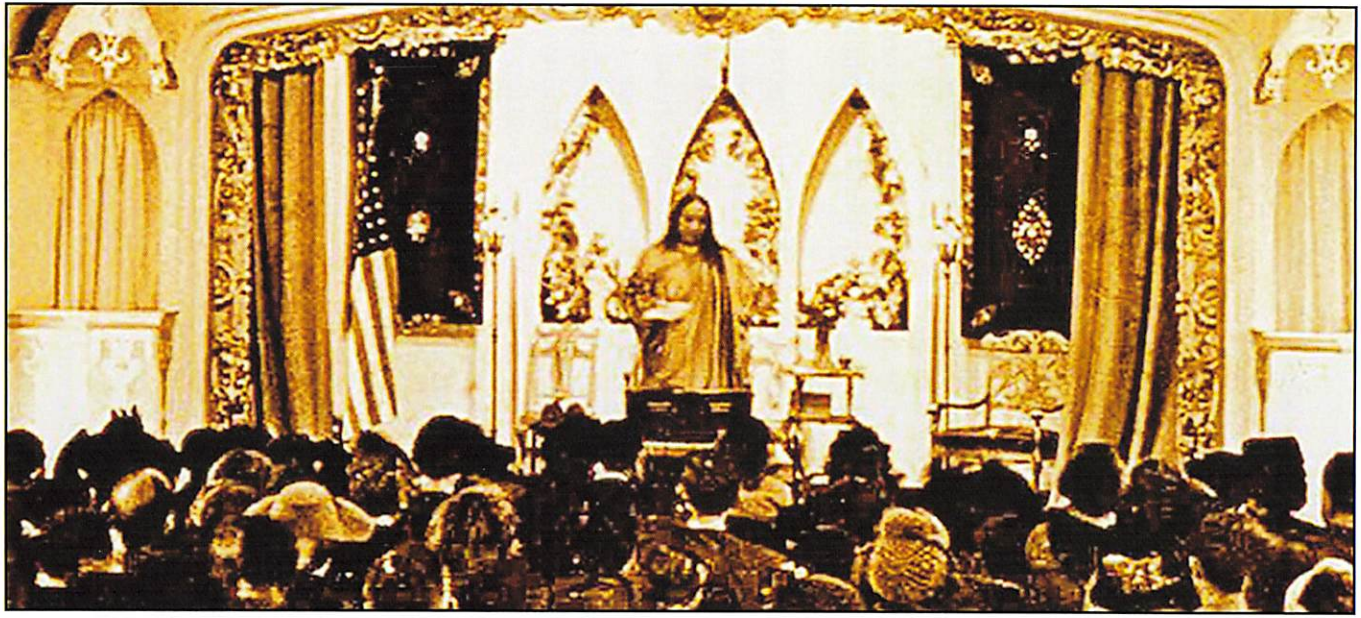
Note: For useful information about gunas and spiritual awakening, read chapter fourteen in *The Eternal Way*: *The Inner Meaning of the Bhagavad Gita*. When reading the text, remember that the words of the allegorical character Krishna represent knowledge and wisdom of your enlightened consciousness.

Be temporarily free from false ideas, impulsive or compulsive inclinations, unwanted desires, addictive tendencies, troublesome subconscious impulses, and environmental discord. Withdraw your attention from those conditions; view them with an attitude of unemotional objectivity. Identify with your essence, your true nature, where you are always pure, serene, joyously self-knowing, and aware of your oneness with the Infinite.

When you are permanently, spiritually enlightened, that realization of freedom will be constant. Until then, use will and imagination to control your states of mind and consciousness, emotions, and behaviors. View yourself as a free, Self-directed spiritual being with limitless capacities to fully experience and express excellence in all aspects of your life.

Affirm With Understanding and Conviction

I am a free, Self-directed spiritual being with limitless capacities to fully experience and express excellence in all aspects of my life!



Paramahansa Yogananda conducting a Sunday morning service
at the Hollywood Self-Realization Fellowship Temple.
Early 1940s.

Dialogue

Kriya Yoga Traditions and Practices

Send questions, inquiries, or themes—which may be used in a future issue of this publication—by regular mail or to rd@csa-davis.org

Does Kriya Yoga initiation really quicken our spiritual growth? Some people say the occasion was very helpful. Others say they are not aware of any differences in their understanding or their ability to meditate or live more effectively.

Initiation may produce a partial spiritual awakening. It is more usual that obvious spiritual growth is experienced in the weeks and months after initiation because of one's aspiration to be enlightened, wise intentional living, contemplation of higher realities, and regular meditation practice.

Some initiated individuals experience *shaktipat* (spiritual energy transmission) from the teacher or from the environment in which unique energy frequencies are present, which may be intense, medium, or gentle. An intense event may result in ecstatic sensations and expanded and clarified awareness. One that is medium may produce pronounced energy flows, feelings of devotion, and a sense of attunement with a larger Reality. A mild event may produce calmness and strengthen devotion and resolve to be dedicated to right spiritual practices.

During the first Kriya Yoga initiation service I attended in August of 1950, when Paramahansa Yogananda blessed each person by putting his right hand on their forehead, I heard him say, "I am sending light into your body! I am giving you everything! It is up to you to receive it!"

Later that day he put his hands on my head and helped me see an inner, bright light. I had experienced strong movements of energy in my spine a few months earlier.

Some people whose dormant forces were aroused eventually neglect their spiritual practices. Some who didn't have exceptional experiences patiently go forward with firm resolve to be enlightened and have satisfying results.

After having dormant life forces activated and learning to meditate, spiritual awakening may be interrupted or slowed because of conditions that blur the mind and awareness, doubt, confusion, emotional conflicts, or attachments of various kinds.

Common conditions that modify the mind and awareness are fluctuations and changes produced by subliminal impulses that activate thoughts and emotions, false beliefs, illusions or flawed perceptions, fantasy or hallucinations, or troublesome subconscious influences.

Doubt can be replaced with knowledge and faith. Confusion can be avoided by acquiring accurate information and rational thinking. Emotional conflicts can be resolved by honest self-analysis and growing to emotional maturity. Attachments can be renounced by using discriminative intelligence and cultivating Self-realization that replaces egocentric mental attitudes.

Conditions that interfere with meditative contemplation can be overcome by using effective forms of practice and techniques such as Kriya Pranayama.

Resistance to changing acquired mental attitudes, modes of behavior, and personality characteristics that might interfere with spiritual awakening can usually be outgrown as superconscious realizations occur.

When we resist necessary changes or are not aware that changes are necessary, circumstances might arise that provide an opportunity to make right choices, or we may be informed by what someone says, what we read, or an insight that suddenly emerges in our awareness.

The primary obstacle to spiritual awakening is attachment to a mistaken sense of self-identity which confines awareness and inclines one to be personality-centered.

Internalization of attention and awareness
is accomplished by directing it inward.
It provides complete mastery of the senses.
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 2:54,55

Regarding moral or right behaviors: how can we be completely harmless when we have to get rid of mice, insects, or other living things that come into our house or cause problems? Is it ever "right" or permissible to lie to someone?

Although we should avoid harming any form of life when it is possible to do so, we should not have desires or inclinations to cause harm. When we have to deal with mice, cockroaches, wasps, hornets, or worms or bugs that destroy garden plants, we can do it efficiently without enjoying our actions or having feelings of guilt or remorse.

When someone greets us and casually asks, "How are you?", and we say, "I'm very well, thank you," we are not really lying. It is mutually understood that we are engaged in superficial social conversation.

If someone asks us for the location of a person who they want to harm, to say "I don't know" would not be a serious lapse of moral behavior.

I am impressed that so many people in the world are interested in Yoga, meditation, good nutrition, and other life-enhancing activities. Do you think this trend will continue?

Recent studies indicate that perhaps 20 million Americans practice some form of Yoga and millions more meditate. Many people in other countries are also attracted to these practices. Increasing numbers of people will be involved with these and other useful activities—as a way to improve their physical and psychological health and functional abilities rather than to be spiritually enlightened. As people become more alertly aware and creatively competent, they will spontaneously awaken to clear states of consciousness and comprehend higher realities.

The Absolute is *sat* (being–truth–reality); knowledge and the infinite Reality in which this world is interwoven; that from which all originated and into which all is absorbed; and which, being known, makes everything known.
– *The Shandilya Upanishad*

I like to examine explanations of ultimate Reality and processes of cosmic manifestation, but don't fully understand them.

As you continue to contemplate higher realities, knowledge of them will emerge from within you. Regular superconscious meditation will improve your intellectual powers, clarify your awareness, and make your consciousness receptive to what will be revealed. As innate knowledge emerges, you will be able to recognize what is true. It will be familiar, rather than viewed as completely new, because it has always been in your essence.

Should I do a specific number of kriya pranayamas or only as many as I feel like doing?

For the first year or two after being initiated, it can be helpful to do 12 to 36 or 48 during each meditation session, once or twice a day. Doing them in multiples of 12 is easy to remember. Later, you may be inclined to do more, or fewer, focusing on depth of practice rather than specific numbers, until attention is internalized and concentration is steady. During meditation sessions of an hour or more, you may occasionally do a few more repetitions to refocus your attention. After kriya pranayama, be mentally and emotionally calm and experience deep silence. Effective use of meditation techniques can prepare us for deep, effortless meditation.

Pranayama and contemplation of Om and ultimate Reality, recommended in *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra* written two thousand years ago, were known and used by yogis hundreds of years earlier and have always been known to a few people. Babaji permitted Lahiri Mahasaya to teach Kriya Yoga to disciples with well-ordered secular lives rather than only to cloistered truth seekers. In the emerging New Era, increasing numbers of people can understand the philosophical principles on which Kriya Yoga practices are based and adopt lifestyle regimens and spiritual practices that allow their innate qualities to emerge. What is most needed is complete dedication to an effective spiritual path that culminates in spiritual enlightenment.

When you were with Paramahansa Yogananda during the last two years of his earth-life, were you aware of any concerns that he had about his disciples or his organization?

My guru was aware that he would leave his body within a few months. He told some of us that he was already "living on borrowed time"—that his incarnation had been extended so that he could finish some important work.

He wanted the organization he founded to continue to serve truth seekers far into the future. He wanted it to be financially strong, well-organized, and responsibly managed by competent, spiritually conscious disciples. He chose those who understood his wishes and would adhere to the guidelines that he outlined. After he passed, James Lynn, his most spiritually advanced male disciple whom he appointed to succeed him as president and spiritual director, donated a million dollars to Self-Realization Fellowship and arranged for three million dollars to go to the organization after his own demise, which occurred in 1955.

Although Master had said that some of his disciples were teachers (gurus) with disciples (students), he gave the board of directors the authority to guide the organization rather than appoint a single person as an authority-figure. Mr. Lynn left his body three years after Master's passing. None of Master's other disciples, most of whom were young, were sufficiently spiritually mature or competent to publicly succeed Master as a guru at the head of the organization.

It was announced that Master's writings and his teachings as interpreted by the board of directors would inform truth seekers who requested instruction and initiation. Information is useful and initiation into Kriya Yoga meditation methods can be helpful. Initiates who are told to accept Paramahansa Yogananda as their guru and expect to be guided and helped are being misinformed; they do not have contact with him. They may feel confident and secure, as some Christians say they do because of their faith in Jesus, and may even have some beneficial spiritual awakening experiences because of their aspiration and faith.

Even when mental and spiritual rapport with disembodied saints is established, to have helpful instruction and guidance

there must be direct communication rather than vague mental impressions, dreams, or feelings.

Master often said that his "work" was twofold. His *quantity* work was reaching out to all who were sincerely interested in self-improvement and spiritual growth. His *quality* work was to assist individuals who were prepared for discipleship, were willing and able to learn how to nurture their spiritual growth, and would be 100% committed to their spiritual practices.

Quantity work (publishing literature, establishing temples and other meeting places, scheduling and presenting classes and retreats) as well as opportunities for discipleship training, can be done by organized endeavors.

Quality work, the inner way, can be done without organized endeavors—it can only occur through those who are spiritually awake and through whom truth-consciousness and transformative influences can be transmitted.

Paramahansa Yogananda privately said that, although the guru-disciple tradition was more important than an organized endeavor, in our current era the latter is useful. Among his few disciples who are still living in our world, I am the only one personally ordained by him who is teaching and initiating. Some of my disciples, and their disciples, will represent our Kriya Yoga tradition far into the future.

Accurate information about higher realities can be helpful; direct transmission of truth-consciousness and spiritual forces through a lineage of enlightened teachers is transformative. Self-knowledge and knowledge of higher realities that cannot be described with words can emerge from within us and free us from conditions that were restrictive when our awareness was modified and confined.

Keeping on, keeping on; one day behold!, divine realization.
– Lahiri Mahasaya (1828 – 1895)

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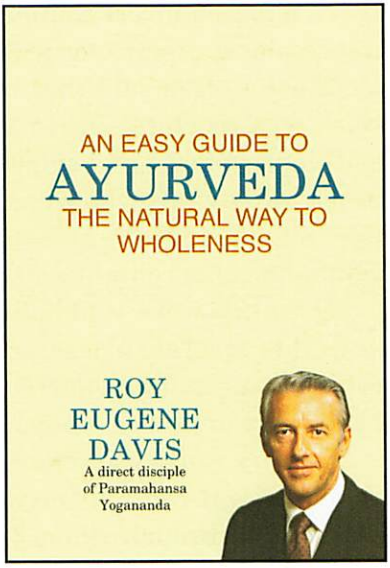

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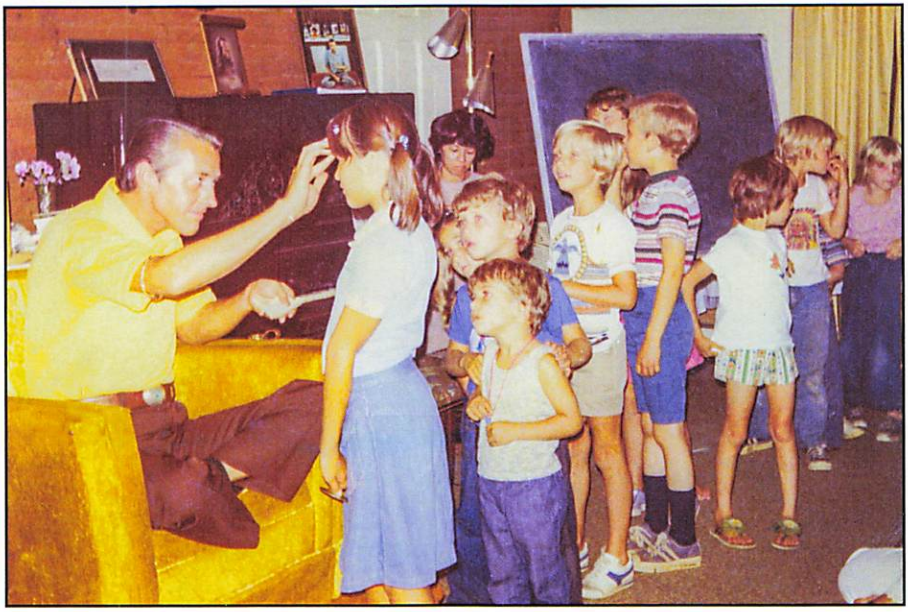

Blessing the children during a CSA Family Week. *August, 1976*

In the 1970s and 80s we offered a one week retreat for children each summer. Montessori teachers supervised their activities.

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The Liberating Results of Knowing and Living the Truth

We should remember that the purpose of our spiritual practices is to awaken from thinking and behaving as limited human beings to awareness and knowledge of our true nature. Are we doing this, or are we allowing conditioned mental attitudes and behaviors, personal preferences, and habitual ways of thinking to confine our awareness?

How many years have you been pondering metaphysical ideas, reading spiritual literature, perhaps attending retreats and seminars, trying to meditate effectively, and endeavoring to live skillfully?

Are your spiritual practices ideal for you?

Have your studies and actions been productive?

Are you more spiritually awake and freely functional?

Are you fully committed to being spiritually enlightened in your current incarnation?

Are your thoughts, moods, lifestyle routines, and behaviors fully conformed to your intention to be spiritually enlightened?

Are you emotionally mature?

Do you always endeavor to live up to your full potential to experience and express excellence in all aspects of your life?

Do you know that because you are an immortal unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality, all knowledge of your true nature and ultimate Reality is within you?

Don't be unhappy if you couldn't immediately say "yes" to most of the questions. Human nature is not always easy to transcend and our innate qualities are not always quickly forthcoming.

Biographies of saintly people and spiritually advanced yogis often describe their early difficulties and how they had to overcome troublesome subconscious inclinations and other conditions that interfered with their spiritual awakening. The great lesson to be learned from such stories is that they eventually prevailed because of their intensive (concentrated) aspiration and unwavering will to succeed. They didn't give up.

Although external rituals and spiritual practices may differ, the *one way* to be Self- and God-realized is to awaken from ego-centric states of awareness through superconscious states to direct experience of our pure essence. This can occur at any moment as a sudden flash of insight or when the wavelike movements and changes that ordinarily occur in the mind and awareness cease. Contemplation (careful examination with alert expectation of discovery) of higher realities can result in satisfying insights:

> By contemplation on pure consciousness, knowledge of it is revealed. By contemplation on one's heart [essence], knowledge of it is revealed. By contemplation on the self-existent reality of consciousness, the ability to discern the difference between it and ordinary states of consciousness is acquired.
> *– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 3:34–36*

Ordinary (modified, blurred and disordered) states of mind and awareness, egocentric personality traits, superficial interests, and impulsive behaviors are characteristics of most people who consider themselves to be normal. See the television shows, music, and sports events that entertain millions of people and the simplistic advertising used to promote and sell a variety of products and services to know what an average person thinks and how easily he or she is influenced.

Refuse to be ordinary or average. View your personality, not as what you are, but as a mask through which you express and communicate when relating to objective conditions while being aware of your true nature as a changeless witness or observer.

Your physical history is not as important as your spiritual history that started when you were individualized as a unit of pure consciousness, became involved with the field of nature, and brought you to your present place in life.

What will you do from where you are? Will you wander in space and time without being anchored in Self-knowledge or do you sincerely want to see through and far beyond all illusions

and awaken to complete Self- and God-realization? Whatever you can vividly "see" for yourself and believe to be possible can be realized (experienced and known).

If you are frustrated because spiritual awakening is slow or you cannot get beyond a certain stage of meditation, instead of being angry or sad, arouse your soul forces and affirm several times, "I am an immortal, spiritual being." If you are alone, speak it audibly with conviction. Use it as a mantra, going deeper with it for several minutes. Then sit in the silence, continuing to acknowledge and be aware of your true nature. Control your mind, feelings, and consciousness. When your mind is calm, allow your innate qualities to emerge.

When you sit to meditate, think about God and some spiritual role models. Assume a clear state of consciousness.

Sample Invocation

Infinite God (use any words preferred),
Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar,
Paramahansa Yogananda, (your guru),
help me to bring forth my innate qualities,
clarify my awareness, and know my real
nature and ultimate Reality.

An audible or mental invocation can quickly attune your mind and awareness to the Infinite and internalize your attention to allow meditation to flow easily. It can also dissolve egocentric awareness and more clearly define your meditation purpose. Many people meditate mainly to manage stress and calm the mind. Kriya initiates do that and aspire to experience refined superconsciousness and transcendent realizations.

As a kriya initiate, cultivate mental and spiritual attunement with the lineage of gurus. Want to be as cosmic- and God-conscious as they are, rather than want to have an emotionally dependent relationship with them. Paramahansa Yogananda told disciples, "I want you to be as [spiritually] strong as I am!"

All enlightened gurus (teachers) want their disciples to be fully spiritually awake and to eventually be able to assist other truth seekers to be spiritually awake. They emphasize ultimate

Reality that is to be known rather than try to attract attention to themselves.

To assist others to be Self-realized, we have to be Self-realized. What we are at the core of our being does not change. Our true nature always being what it is wherever we are and whatever we are doing, the Self of us is always present to be acknowledged. Instead of endeavoring to experience their pure, serene nature, many people keep their awareness confined to an egocentric self-view and wonder why they don't awaken beyond that limited condition.

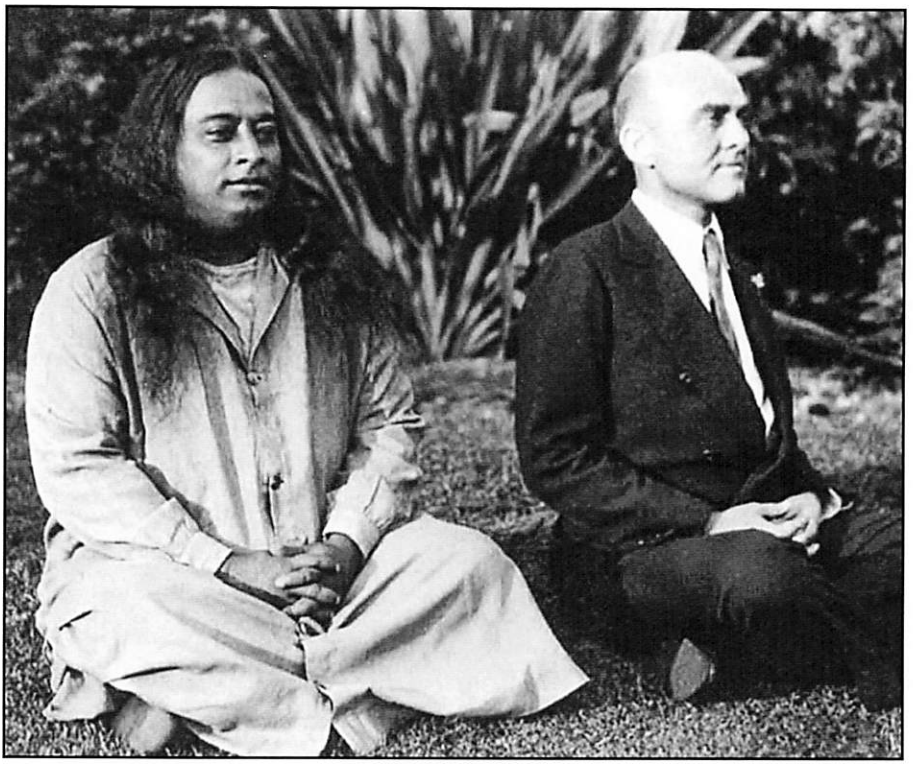
When your mind is calm, contemplate your pure essence. As thoughts settle, sit, wait, and watch what occurs. Want to be Self-aware and Self-knowing without trying hard to have that awareness and knowing, and without being worried about the outcome of what you are doing. Relax into the process. Let the insights emerge as Self-revelations.

Affirm With Conviction

Fully dedicated to being completely Self-Realized,
I do what allows my innate qualities and Self-knowledge to emerge while avoiding nonuseful thoughts, moods, activities, and relationships.

Note: Frequently read Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras. Sometimes read my commentary and at other times read only the sutras while having your own insights. Your comprehension of the sutras will be greater as your intellectual and intuitive abilities improve. Sutras are "threads" of information that compose the fabric or body of information. Read the sutras after meditating when your mind is calm, before meditating to be inspired, and at other times when you want to ponder their meaning.

My transliteration of the text, with commentary, is in *The Science of Self-Realizaton*. Also in *A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice*, the 8.5 x 11 format book given to new Kriya initiates. In India, in *The Path of Light*, published by Motilal Banarsidass, mlbd.com. In Germany, *Pfad des Lichts*, kriya-yoga.de.



Paramahansa Yogananda and James J. Lynn
Late 1930s

James J. Lynn (1893–1955) attended lectures by Paramahansa Yogananda in Kansas City, Missouri, in the early 1930s and experienced meditative ecstasy when he was initiated. A few years later, with his guru's help, he realized a thought-free transcendent samadhi. In 1951 it was publicly announced that he would be the next president of Self-Realization Fellowship. The owner of two insurance companies in Kansas City and a company that sucessfully drilled for oil in Louisiana and Texas, Mr. Lynn provided generous financial support to SRF for many years. In the early 1950s, he donated one million dollars and arranged for three million dollers to be given after his passing.

Kriya Yoga Traditions and Practices

Send questions and inquiries for possible use in future issues.
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I am a recent kriya initiate. How soon can I be Self-realized?

As soon as you can acknowledge and experience your true nature. Awakening may be slow, faster, or very fast according to your capacity to awaken and the intensiveness (concentration) of metaphysical study and contemplation of your essence and ultimate Reality. It is important that you keep your small sense of self-identity out of the way.

Explain about the energies of the chakras: how to activate them and what they do.

There is no need to be overly concerned about chakras and their energies, or to work hard to arouse subtle forces. Regular use of kriya pranayama is the most useful practice. Also, cultivate devotion to ultimate Reality, maintain ethical behaviors, and live with a clear sense of purposes that are of value.

Did you see any changes in Paramahansa Yogananda's mental attitudes, states of consciousness, and behaviors during the last few months before he left his body?

He detached his attention from outer conditions, was more inward and (as he once said) "more absolute": inclined to be attracted to higher realities and disinterested in ordinary matters. When talking informally with a few disciples, he said, "In the future you will see me as you have always seen me, but inside, I am completely detached." He also said, "I am not the guru. God is the guru. I am God's servant."

Knowing that he would soon depart, he told the board of directors how to expand the services of the organization, was attentive to the needs of certain disciples, and was frequently absorbed in superconscious meditation. He ordained me in late

1951 and later informed the board of directors that I was to be the minister of the Phoenix, Arizona, SRF Center after his passing, which occurred in the late evening of March 7, 1952, two days before my 21st birthday. Five days later, after a funeral service had been conducted, Faye Wright (later Daya Mata) told me about Master's decision. On a few occasions during the previous months, he had said, "Be patient, Roy, I have plans for you."

My interactions with Paramahansa Yogananda and the years of learning and ministry activities that followed were the results of grace. When I first read *Autobiography of a Yogi* in 1949 when I was eighteen years of age I knew that this Kriya Yoga tradition was my path. Almost everything else that has been of value that occurred after that recognition happened with little or no effort. When I was with him at his private retreat in the California Mohave desert during the summer of 1950, he told me, "You came to help me with this work."

My guru often said "the work" when referring to his mission of teaching Kriya Yoga. He said it was transformative because it could serve the needs of spiritual aspirants who were attracted to it and was represented by a lineage of Self-realized teachers, rather than a transmission of superficial information and cultural beliefs or behaviors. A unique feature of the tradition is the teaching of meditation methods that can be used to calm the mind and elicit one's innate qualities and Self-knowledge.

That very few people really understood the value of Kriya Yoga practices, or used them effectively, did not cause my guru to be disappointed or to stop teaching. He knew that the emergence of spiritual awareness in the current era is slow; that it will be much faster as the intellectual capacities of more people on our planet increase in the next few decades.

Kriya Yoga initiates should remember that right thinking, living, and spiritual practice refine their nervous system and greatly improve the capacities of their brain to accommodate superconscious states as well as unveils their innate knowledge of their true nature and higher realities.

To have good results from Kriya Yoga practice, what are some of the essential characteristics one should have?

Kriya Yoga practitioners should be initiates fully dedicated to being Self- and God-realized rather than have a superficial interest in spirituality. They should be:

- *Intellectually discerning, with an ability to comprehend what they examine and easily know the difference between what is true and what is false.* They should want to know the facts of life rather than accept beliefs and opinions.
- *Mentally competent*: able to perceive accurately and to think rationally.
- *Emotionally stable.* Emotional stability can be cultivated by improving our understanding of our true nature and higher realities, regular superconscious meditation, and learning to be calmly established in Self-awareness in all circumstances.
- *Honest, truthful, kind, and generous.* Morality contributes to psychological, social, and environmental well-being.
- *Humble:* without an inflated sense of egocentric or personality oriented self-importance.
- *Highly self-motivated.* With will and purposeful intention to succeed in all useful ventures.
- *Wisely self-disciplined.* The skillful doing of what needs to be done for our total well-being and spiritual awakening.
- *Able to skillfully practice superconscious meditation.* A practice that many kriya initiates neglect, or do without being attentive. Meditate with interest in having satisfying results. Pray, affirm, and use kriya meditation techniques to control your attention and bring forth refined superconsciousness.

Ultimate Reality is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. Transcending time, space, and relative conditions, it is the teacher of the ancient teachers. Om indicates its existence. Meditation on [in] Om results in Self-realization. Ultimate Reality is then realized and all obstacles [to Self-realization] are removed or transcended.

– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 1:25 – 29

Some obstacles to spiritual awakening are said to be illness, doubt, neglect of spiritual practices, confusion about philosophical ideas, emotional instability, various kinds of addictions, misperceptions, and distractions. Their influences can be overcome by pranayama that removes attention from limiting conditions and involves it with the process.

At all times, cultivate health; avoid doubt by acquiring understanding; attend to spiritual practices; avoid confusion by having accurate knowledge; stay emotionally calm; renounce addictions and replace them with wholesome habits; accurately perceive what is observed; concentrate on important matters.

Control your attention, moods, states of consciousness, and behaviors. Constructive, practical thinking and living provides a firm foundation for spiritual growth.

Complete, effective Kriya Yoga practices include disciplined thinking and behaviors, profound (in-depth) examination of our true nature and higher realities, and surrender (letting go) and transcendence of our mistaken sense of self-identity. To try to be superconscious and spiritually enlightened while neglecting the basic foundation practices is a waste of time and effort.

From time to time, fleeting insights and partial awakenings that can spontaneously occur may inspire and motivate us to be more dedicated on our spiritual path. To practice Kriya Yoga, we don't have to adopt strange beliefs or behaviors. The only difference between us and ordinary people is that we should be more alert, spiritually aware, compassionate, and functional.

> This is the wisdom of the ancient seers. Now hear it, and apply it with dedicated practice. With this knowledge you shall rid yourself of the bondage of karma [cause and effect]. In this righteous way, no endeavor is wasted and no obstacle prevails. Even a little of this practice protects one from great misfortune. On this path, the firmly decided are resolute. The thoughts of the uncommitted branch out in endless variations.
>
> *– Bhagavad Gita 2:39 – 41*
>
> (From *The Eternal Way* published by CSA Press)

Explain more about using an affirmation to aid concentration during meditation.

The major challenge when meditating is to control attention. When sitting in silence, if we are not centered and Self-aware, our attention may wander or be overly influenced by the movements and changes that occur in the mind and awareness.

Having something to contemplate can enable us to focus our attention. On page 5 of this issue of *Radiance* I recommended the affirmation:

I am an immortal, spiritual being.

Other affirmations that can be helpful are:

I am a flawless unit ... of the pure essence ...
of ultimate Reality.

and

The radiant purity of my essence of being
continuously illumines my mind and consciousness.

Affirmations are truthful declarations to be used until they are realized (experienced). To use an affirmation as a mantra, mentally speak it with intention and conviction for 5 to 20 minutes, or more, to become fully involved with it. When your attention is fully absorbed in the affirmation, stop mentally speaking it and abide in awareness and experience of your pure essence. With practice, you will superconsciously experience what is affirmed. Persist until you have a positive experience.

If satisfying results are not experienced when meditating, be more focused and sit longer until thoughts and emotions are settled and your attention is comfortably inward. When reading about saintly people, common characteristics that we may notice are their joyous affirmation of their relationship with the Infinite and their habit of meditating long and deep until they have transcendent perceptions. Many meditators give up too soon. They don't sit long enough.

I have been trying to discover a major purpose for my life that will enable me to know that what I do is worthwhile. How can I know what it is?

Live a good, well-organized life. Notice the creative ideas that arise in your mind and opportunities to be helpful that are presented to you.

A major purpose to fulfill is to be as spiritually awake as possible. Beyond that, intend for your thoughts and actions to be helpful to others and the environment. Think about destiny—a special purpose for your life that must be fulfilled. If you have an intuitive awareness of a destined purpose, ask for it to be revealed. When you know what it is, devote your thoughts, energies, and resources to it. The universe will support and provide for you.

Remember that you are a spiritual being in a spiritual universe. Live realistically with nature's laws while cooperating with mental and spiritual laws of cause and effect. Help others know their spiritual nature when they are receptive to learning about higher realities.

Should I endeavor to inform others about Kriya Yoga?

Yes. Be a good example of right living and effective spiritual practice. Give a copy of *Truth Journal* and a book. If they are interested in Kriya Yoga, give them a copy of *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*. Send them a link to our web site. If you have friends who would like to meditate together now and then, arrange for that to be done. Be discerning. Don't waste time or energy with people who are only superficially interested.

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One who by skillful practice of [kriya] pranayama goes beyond the sound of Om, becomes free from all egocentric desires.
– Lahiri Mahasaya (1828 – 1895)

Are there differences in how meditation methods are taught by various Kriya Yoga teachers?

They may instruct in ways that meet the needs of students or disciples and what they learned from their personal experiences.

Lahiri Mahasaya taught five procedures as first level kriya initiation. Paramahansa Yogananda taught three: maha mudra for those who could comfortably do it; kriya pranayama, and jyoti mudra (contemplation of inner light and sound). He taught chanting Om in the chakras as 2nd level kriya initiation.

Some Kriya Yoga teachers say that kriya pranayama must be done by breathing through the mouth to have the feeling of coolness in the throat; others say that the same results can be had by breathing through the nostrils. The usual teaching is that breathing through the mouth is for new practitioners. When the current can be felt in the spine, breathing can be done through the nostrils.

Some insist that Om or other mantras be mentally chanted in the chakras during kriya pranayama. Others say that doing that is not necessary if attention can easily be fully involved with pranayama practice. To disciples who needed to be more focused when doing kriya pranayama, Paramahansa Yogananda sometimes recommended that they include mental chanting of Om or hong-sau or so-ham. O-o-o-o-o-o-m can be mentally chanted with inhalation and with exhalation. With hong-sau or so-ham, mentally chant the first syllable with inhalation and the second syllable with exhalation. Example: H-o-o-o-o-o-o-ng and s-a-a-a-a-a-w. Or s-o-o-o-o-o-o and h-u-u-u-u-u-m.

Variations in meditation techniques advised by a knowledgeable guru (teacher) can enable a disciple to have ideal results.

Some insist that meditators sit in a cross-legged posture; others say that sitting in a chair is permissible. The truth: any seated posture that is comfortable can be used.

The ideal culmination of kriya pranayama practice is to have the body relaxed and still, life forces balanced, the mind calm, and awareness clear so that pure consciousness prevails.

Preoccupation with pleasant physical sensations or mental

or visual phenomena is to be avoided as they indicate restlessness and perhaps the influences of subtle attributes (gunas) in nature that may influence our mental and emotional states and states of consciousness.

Kriya initiates should aspire to transcend all conditions that confine and limit or distort their awareness. The ultimate degree of Self-realization to which to awaken is fully conscious aloneness-oneness without the support of thoughts, moods, sensations, or influences of gunas.

Before pure Self-realization occurs, one may have oneness experiences supported by thoughts or subtle perceptions or sensations along with an intellectual and intuitive awareness of pure Self-realization.

Although proficient use of effective meditation techniques can be helpful, it should be remembered that they are to be put aside when they are no longer needed. Fervent aspiration to be Self-realized along with surrender (letting go) of rigid opinions and egocentric attitudes and behaviors is recommended.

Authentic spiritual growth (unveiling and revelation of our innate qualities, capacities, and knowledge) is more likely to occur when we cultivate Self-awareness and Self-confidence that supports our intention to be spiritually enlightened.

Initiation is an occasion to learn to live skillfully and choose to be committed to a higher purpose-directed way of life. It can connect us with other initiates near and far who share our aspirations, attune our mind and consciousness with the lineage of Self-realized gurus, and make us receptive to flows of grace which provide unearned, unplanned, supportive and fortunate events, circumstances, and experiences.

Your initiation should be viewed as a great blessing that provides you with the opportunities to quickly awaken to Self-knowledge. Demonstrate your gratitude by thinking and living in ways that allow your spiritual growth to be easy and fast and your activities and circumstances satisfying and enjoyable.

When you initiate someone, I, or one of
the great ones [gurus] will be there.
(Paramahansa Yogananda's words to me in 1951)

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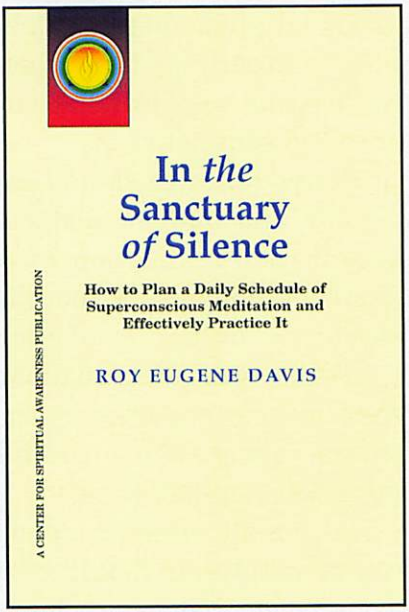
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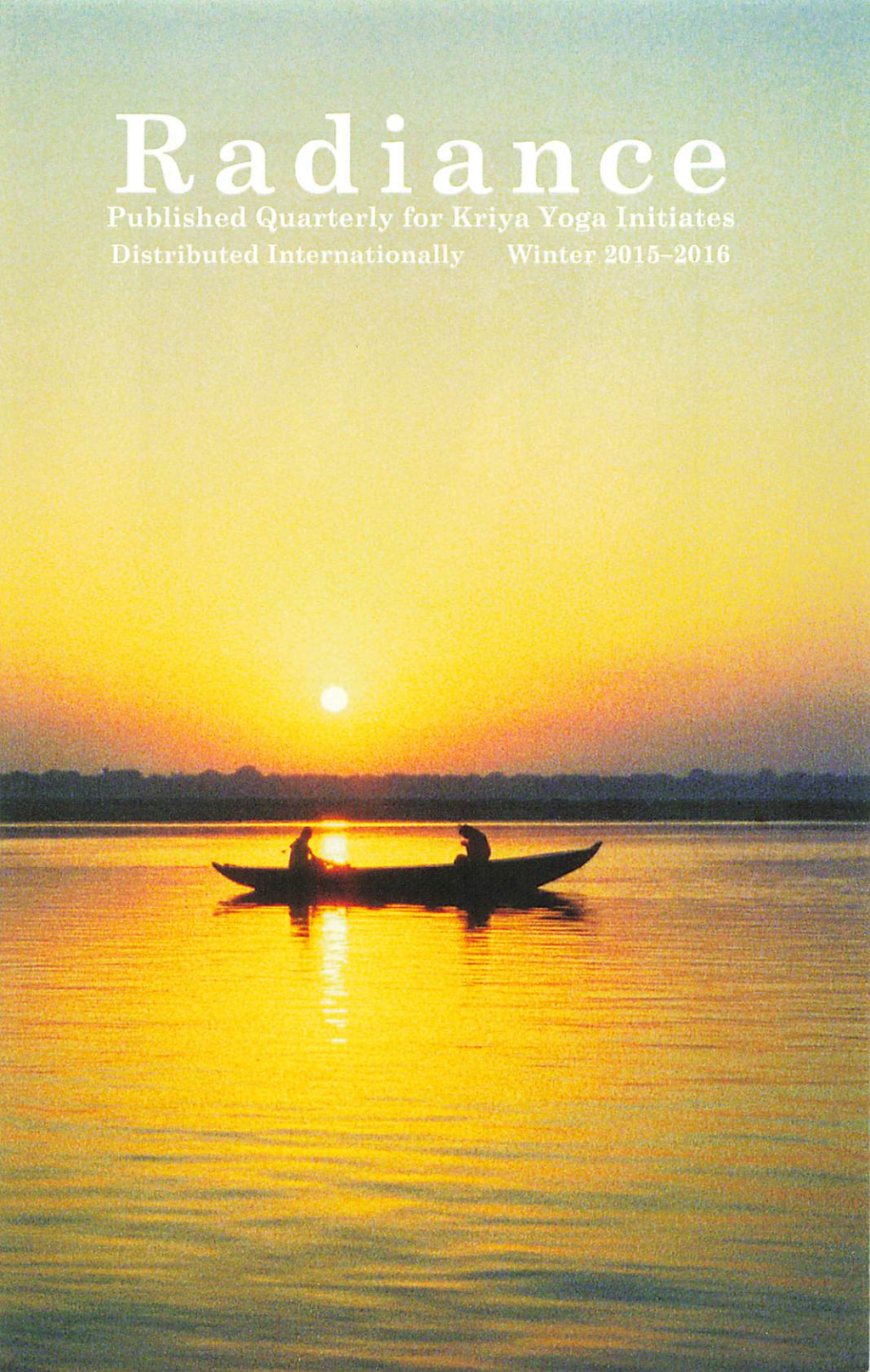

With Dr. Ramamurti Mishra
(Swami Brahmananda Saraswati)
at Yoga Society of San Francisco. *Early 1970s*

Cover Photo: Sunrise over the Ganges River, Varanasi, India.

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Fluctuations and changes in awareness can be
weakened and removed by meditation and
dispassionate nonattachment.
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 1:12

Nothing Can Separate Us From That Which is Eternally Real

In the future, I will outwardly appear to be as you
have always known me, but I will be playing a role.
Inwardly, I am completely detached.
– Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952)

My guru spoke those words in early 1951 during an informal meeting with a few of his disciples in the hallway of the basement of the SRF headquarters building one year before leaving his body. A yogi's departure from Earth-life is called a *maha* (great) *samadhi* (oneness) because it is said that Self-awareness is restored to its original, pure wholeness.

Thinking about detachment that results in transcendence of the ego (a small sense of I-ness) is not always comfortable because we know it is necessary for our spiritual well-being but may be uncertain about the changes of viewpoints and experiences that might result. We may be inclined to cling to conditions we have known rather than explore different possibilities. Like Arjuna, whose confusion is described in the first chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, we may be reluctant to discard or transcend delusions, illusions, and psychological states that modified our consciousness and influenced our behaviors for many years. *We may want to be free, but not now.*

Patanjali defined *yoga* as samadhi: Self-knowing oneness. He stated that it can be realized by detaching attention and awareness from external conditions, emotional states, and restless movements and changes in the mind and awareness. This can be done by alert introspective meditation and even-minded nonattachment regarding what is perceived or thought about.

When we are involved with work, duties, and projects that are of value to us, we can be effective while still aware of our

spiritual essence and relationship with the Infinite. When we notice that our attention and awareness are too identified with objective conditions, we can choose to be detached from them and more Self-aware.

Even when we endeavor to be alert and attentive, impulses (*vasanas*) from deep levels of consciousness empowered by restlessness, desires, or discontentment, cause wavelike movements and modifying changes (*vrittis*) in mind and awareness that activate thoughts and interfere with concentration.

Do this Experiment

Observe your thoughts and emotions for five to ten minutes.
Notice when attention wanders, memories emerge and fade,
and moods change even when you intend to be focused.

Those are the usual perceptions and states of consciousness most people have except when they are in a deep, dreamless sleep. That is why it is difficult for them to live successfully and meditate effectively, their good intentions are often either not actualized or are forgotten, and they are not peacefully happy.

Do this to Test and Improve Concentration

With eyes open or closed, mentally count to one hundred.
If you succeed, do it again.
If your attention wanders, resume counting from number one.
Conclude the session after ten minutes.
If you have not succeeded, try counting backward from 100,
which may help you to be more attentive.
Mentally imagining or picturing the numbers may be helpful.

Another Exercise to Improve Concentration

Mentally add, subtract, multiply, and divide
simple groups of numbers.

Be alert, attentive, and curious about what you observe and interested in knowing about it.

When you read, try to assume the viewpoint of the author and understand what was intended to be communicated. When

talking with others, try to go behind their words to what they are thinking and their motives. Master sometimes told disciples, "It pleases me when you understand what I say. It pleases me more when you understand without my having to say it."

Consider what you do to live effectively as spiritual practice that is as important as metaphysical study and daily superconscious meditation.

- Acquire and wisely use helpful knowledge.
- Keep your body healthy.
- Maintain your psychological health.
- Keep your living and work spaces clean and well-organized.
- Decide your major purposes and concentrate on them.
- Accomplish worthwhile purposes skillfully and efficiently.
- Immediately do what needs to be done.
- Think rationally.
- Avoid fantasy.
- Don't complain about unwanted circumstances; produce and attract ideal circumstances and experiences.
- Be cheerful and optimistic.
- Speak and write clearly.
- Don't waste vital forces, time, and material resources.
- Pay bills on time.
- Be kind to others and all forms of life.
- Wish for the highest good of everyone, everywhere.
- Grow to emotional maturity. Avoid childish moods, mental attitudes, and behaviors.
- Regularly give a portion of your skills and/or money to worthy endeavors that are well-organized to help people in need, improve social and environmental conditions, and provide truthful spiritual education.
- Experience and express excellence in all aspects of your life.

Dispassionate nonattachment enables one to
control cravings, urges, and instinctual drives.
Higher detachment results from Self-Realization
that makes one impervious to cosmic forces [*gunas*].
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 1:15,16

Use Intelligence, Intuition, and Common Sense to Know The Truth About What You Observe or Contemplate

Just as you can discern the difference between your Self or essence and your mental and emotional states, you can discern the truth about anything else you observe or contemplate. Your faculty of intelligence enables you to discriminate. Your intuition can provide insight without relying on intellect or reason. Successful contemplation can reveal the truth.
Four things to know are:

1. *Ultimate Reality*, which has an absolute or pure essence outside of space/time and an expressive aspect with energetic influences (*gunas*) that produce and maintain universes.
2. *Your true nature*, which is a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality.
3. *Processes of cosmic manifestation.* The expressive aspect of ultimate Reality projects a vibration which produces space, time, cosmic forces, and magnetic fields that form universes. That vibration, which may be heard as AUM (OM), is the primordial (first) field of Nature. The Sanskrit word that describes the characteristics and influences of the primordial field of Nature is *maya*, "to measure, to limit, to form." Its inertia is said to be truth-veiling because it may obscure a deluded soul's perception of Reality. Delusions are false or disordered ideas, beliefs, or opinions that blur awareness and confuse the intellect. Because the influences of inertia are impersonal, they are not evil, malicious, or endowed with intelligence or purposefulness.
4. *How to awaken to complete spiritual enlightenment.* Awakening can be spontaneous when conditions that blur awareness are removed or transcended. Two primary obstacles to awakening are 1) the influence of inertia (*tamas guna*) that weakens our powers of discernment; 2) the habit of identifying with a mistaken sense of self (ego). When the intellect is pure and we know our true nature and ultimate Reality, we are spiritually enlightened.

Sincere desire to be Self-realized supported by profound study of higher realities and effective practices that clarify awareness can quicken our spiritual awakening. Sincere desire motivates us to live right and attracts supportive events and constructive circumstances. Effective spiritual practices bring forth our innate qualities and Self- and God-knowledge.

Skillfully Use the Effective Spiritual Practices of Our Kriya Yoga Tradition

Daily, until you don't have to be reminded, remember that kriyas are actions or procedures; yoga is the holding together of attention and awareness with our pure essence. Basic practices include constructive thinking and living, deep examination of higher realities and our true nature, and willing surrender of a mistaken sense of self-identity. Skillful practices remove troublesome psychological conditions and enable the cultivation of samadhi (transcendent Self-realization). See *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras, chapter two, verses one and two.*

Practice kriya pranayama, then be still in the deep silence and contemplate your pure-conscious essence. The pranayama enlivens the chakras and calms the mind. Let the deep silence inspire you to withdraw from externals, experience transcendent states of consciousness, and allow Self- and God-realization to effortlessly occur. Use pranayama and other meditation methods, then put them aside and meditate. Don't be so fixated on a variety of techniques that you neglect to contemplate OM and its significance and Source.

Samadhi is quickly experienced by devotional surrender
to ultimate Reality. By meditation on ultimate Reality
all obstacles are removed and that Reality is realized.
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 1:23 & 29

Affirm With Realization

Always conscious of my true nature,
I am firmly established in the Infinite.

Paramahansa Yogananda. *August 30, 1950*

Dialogue

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions, and Practices

Send questions or inquiries for possible response in a future issue of *Radiance Newsletter* to **rd@csa-davis.org**

Do I need the personal guidance of a guru (teacher)? If I have one, what should I do to have the best results from the relationship?

Without the personal guidance of a spiritual teacher, adhere to the kriya yoga guidelines and practices. If you have a relationship with competent teacher, carefully listen to his or her words, adhere to effective lifestyle and spiritual practices, stay mentally and spiritually attuned to the teacher by being respectful and having a harmonious relationship.

When you were initiated into this Kriya Yoga tradition, you were provided an opportunity to be mentally and spiritually connected with its lineage of gurus. Kriya Yoga initiation is not a superficial ritual; it is an opportunity to fully commit to intentional living and spiritual practice that can result in Self- and God-realization in one's current incarnation. My guru said that he was not teaching philosophical ideas and lifestyle practices to help people to only improve their human condition. He said that initiates dedicated to their practices could feel or be increasingly aware of the Presence and Power of God in their lives.

Some kriya initiates say they pray to Paramahansa Yogananda and the other gurus. Is doing that of real value? Do the gurus "hear" our prayers? Can (and do) they respond?

Master didn't tell disciples to pray to him. He told us to invite his consciousness and that of the gurus to blend with ours, especially when first sitting to meditate. Whether we can actually do this or whether our invocation enlarges and purifies our consciousness, we can experience positive benefits.

Lahiri Mahasaya left this world in 1895, Sri Yukteswar in 1936, and Paramahansa Yogananda in 1952. We don't know where they are in space or what they are doing. They are not

dwelling in an astral or celestial realm for the purpose of mentally communicating with truth seekers on our planet or elsewhere. Lahiri Mahasaya might have merged his consciousness with OM and That which is beyond it. Sri Yukteswar may also have transcended all relative conditions.

I heard Master say that after he left this world he would "be in space" for a while, be with Babaji for a while, and eventually be incarnated (he didn't say when). He said that when he returned, his "colors" would be blue and gold.

I heard you say that you had initiated more than ten thousand people during the past 60 years. How many have stayed on their path?

Perhaps fewer than 20 percent have been fully dedicated to their spiritual path. Many people who attended my lectures and classes when I began to travel and teach in 1956, when I was 25, were ten, twenty, or thirty years older than I was, and have died. Sixty to seventy percent of those who were initiated in recent years soon became preoccupied with mundane concerns or looked elsewhere for inspiration or instruction. Many who say that this Kriya Yoga path is important to them are not as focused and attentive as they should and can be.

I am inclined to offer initiation freely to anyone who seems sincerely interested in learning. Master was like that: he was interested in providing opportunities for people to help themselves to be more spiritually conscious. In some enlightenment traditions truth seekers are initiated or taught higher realities only after they have demonstrated their willingness to learn by sincerely endeavoring to be emotionally mature and affirming their commitment to further learning and right practice.

It is not always easy to resist and overcome the impulses and inclinations that influence the human condition. When we are fully committed on our spiritual path we have to be willing and able to concentrate on doing what will quickly bring forth our divine qualities and reveal our pure essence.

Our habitual behaviors and actions indicate our mental and emotional states, states of consciousness, and convictions.

Read the *Bhagavad Gita* to be reminded of how to think and live in the highest ways. Mental states, moods, behaviors, and actions should express our innate purity. Remember that the character Krishna represents your enlightened consciousness to which the small sense of self-identity is to be surrendered. The words attributed to Krishna represent your innate knowledge that is always accessible.

What are some things that Paramahansa Yogananda did for you that were especially helpful?

Everything—his words, personal example, early acceptance of me as a disciple, and liberal sharing of his consciousness and spiritual energy—was helpful. Especially helpful was sending me to the SRF Phoenix, Arizona, center (early 1950 to early 1954) where I privately practiced meditation and contemplated the Infinite without having to interact with other disciples or be involved with organizational activities in California.

Master didn't inform me about his specific plans for me. He occasionally said, "Be patient, I have plans for you," "You have a wonderful future," and "Take care of your health, you have much good work to do."

He ordained me in the autumn of 1951 without telling me that he was going to do it. At that time he said, "Teach as I have taught and initiate devotees of God into Kriya Yoga." The day after a funeral service was conducted for him in March, 1952, Faye Wright (Daya Mata) told me that it was "Master's wish" that I be the minister in Phoenix (1952 and 1953).

Because I had been serving as an assistant to the minister in Phoenix for about one year, it was easier to assume my new role when he was assigned to other duties in Los Angeles.

The few years of solitary, monastic life in Phoenix enabled me to become firmly established in the Infinite. Although in the years that followed, I had much to learn and some challenges to confront and overcome, I was always aware of my relationship with our gurus and a larger, supportive Reality.

How important is it to attempt to arouse kundalini energies?

Kundalini, dormant soul force or energy said to be "coiled" around the lower chakras in people who are not yet spiritually awake, can be aroused by devotion, spiritual aspiration, superconscious meditation practice, and mental and spiritual attunement with someone in whom the energies are freely flowing. Extreme pranayama or use of other procedures in endeavors to force kundalini arousal is not recommended. It is better to cultivate virtuous mental states and behaviors, be emotionally mature, live effectively, examine higher realities, and become proficient in *frequent* superconscious meditation.

Occasional or short superconscious meditation sessions can reduce stress and help us to be emotionally calm and mentally alert. Frequent, longer, deeper superconscious meditation can be psychologically transformative and enable us to experience transcendent realizations.

Debilitating psychological conditions and troublesome subconscious influences are obstacles to awakening to Self-realization. Many of them, such as anxiety, doubt, lack of confidence, egotism, and restlessness, can be renounced by choice, which is easier when we are Self-knowing and strongly committed to a spiritual path.

Physical obstacles to Self-realization, such as an unrefined nervous system or undeveloped brain capacities can be overcome by constructive, wholesome living, superconscious meditation, and knowing that, as spiritual beings, we are superior to mental and physical conditions.

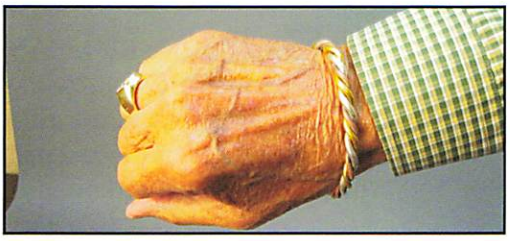
What are some of the conditioned or habitual mental attitudes, states of consciousness, and behaviors that interfere with spiritual awakening?

One restrictive condition is a preference to think and act as an ordinary egocentric, personality-identified being instead of as a discerning spiritual being. Another restrictive condition is the habit of preferring to be involved with external situations that stimulate the mind and senses.

Egocentric mental attitudes and activities keep us limited and may increase and strengthen troublesome subconscious influences or karma. The words *karma* and *kriya* have a common origin that indicates actions or influences that may be able to cause effects. Our karmic condition includes subconscious conditions and influences; habitual states of consciousness; mental and emotional states; desires; beliefs; opinions; habitual behaviors; intentional actions; and inherited traits. We may also be influenced by the karmic influences of individuals or groups of people with whom we associate or identify.

Some karmic conditions that are very weak have little or no influence. Others may be influential in varying degrees when there are opportunities for their expression. Some may be very influential. Neutralize them with constructive thinking and actions and rise above them by being superconscious.

Paramahansa Yogananda advised people to avoid thinking or saying that karma controlled them or that they could not awaken spiritually because of their bad or heavy karma. He also advised them not to be too concerned about astrological indications. Sri Yukteswar recommended using certain metals and gems of 2 carats or more to weaken planetary influences, sometimes for their effectiveness and at other times to encourage a person to have faith that they could overcome a troublesome condition or situation. For general purposes he advised some disciples to wear a bangle made with pure gold, silver, and copper wires. Master also advised some of his disciples to wear such a bangle. To some disciples who asked him if they should obtain one, he said, "You don't need it." Many disciples, however, wore one—as I have for many years—as a talisman that may be of practical value while being a visible reminder of one's commitment to their spiritual path.



Example of a gold, silver, and copper bangle recommended by Sri Yukteswar.

Read "The Inner World of Colors, Gemstones, Metals, and Mantras: Their Special Qualities and Beneficial Applications According to Ancient Traditions and Modern Discoveries" in my book, *An Easy Guide to Ayurveda* pages 129 to 156.

Although I have been enjoyably devoted to this Kriya Yoga path for many years, I don't think I have made much progress. I am mentally and emotionally peaceful and satisfied with my understanding of philosophical concepts, but am not able to be superconscious or have transcendent states of consciousness.

Meditate longer and deeper until your ordinary awareness of self-identity dissolves and you apprehend a larger Reality.

Be outwardly attentive while inwardly aware of your real nature as a spiritual being living in a spiritual world.

When you first sit to meditate, acknowledge that you are an individualized unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality and invoke the spiritual energy of our lineage of gurus. Withdraw from external conditions. Put your attention in the spine and bring energies up through the chakras to the higher brain. If you need to do something to help stay internalized, practice a few rounds of kriya pranayama or observe your natural breathing, then meditate in Om, let your attention be absorbed in it, then aspire to transcend it. When you have done all that you know to do to be Self-realized, let your innate urge to be fully awake be more influential.

Continue to aspire to be spiritually enlightened and believe that you will be.

Aspiring only unto me, many from whom greed,
fear, and anger have departed, purified by their
higher knowledge, have realized me.
– *Bhagavad Gita 4:10*

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With attention and awareness always absorbed in pure consciousness, with all obstacles to spiritual enlightenment banished or transcended, many devotees have awakened to Self-realization.

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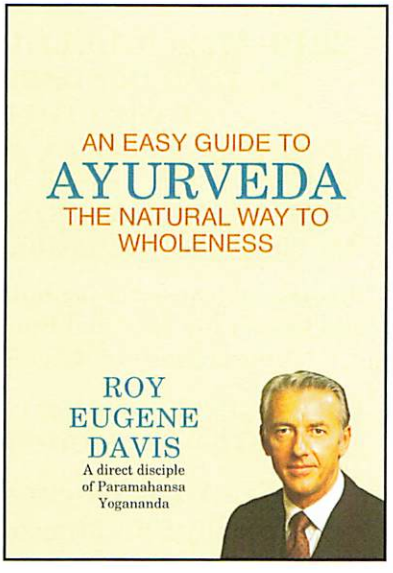

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Complete Restoration of Our Awareness to Its Original, Pure Wholeness Can Be Fully Realized

Aspirants to liberation [of consciousness] who have renounced attachments to sense pleasures, put their attention between the eyebrows [*ajna chakra*, the center of will or self-control], harmonized *prana* and *apana* [aspects of life force that regulate inhalation and exhalation], controlled the senses, mind, and intellect, and are free from cravings, fear, and anger, are already liberated while in the physical body. That state of one's consciousness is called *jivanmukta*.

– Sri Yukteswar's translation of verses 27 & 28 in the fifth chapter (The Yoga of Renunciation) of the Bhagavad Gita

The teachings of almost every religious movement emphasize the final aim of right living and spiritual practice to be a kind of salvation (permanent freedom from suffering and troubles that are common to the human condition), eternal life in a heaven-like place or state of consciousness, or spiritual enlightenment without delusions, illusions, and troublesome external and subjective influences.

In our Kriya Yoga tradition the furthest or ultimate extent of awakening is transcendent realization that provides direct experience of our pure essence and of ultimate Reality. Early realizations may be mixed with subtle thoughts and emotions, or troublesome subconscious influences may be dormant but not completely neutralized. Pure realizations are not influenced by external or subjective conditions.

Self-realization with a residue of subconscious influences is the stage of *jivanmukta*, "soul freedom" while embodied. A Self-realized person without troublesome (karmic) mental impressions (*samskaras*) is a *paramamukta*, "supremely free."

I heard Master say to a group of disciples, "Among those who are here on this occasion, many will be Self-realized and some will be jivanmuktas." He occasionally privately mentioned

a few disciples who would be liberated. To one who asked, "Will I be liberated?", he quietly replied, "You should be." He could not always accurately see specific future conditions of disciples because they were also responsible for what would occur. He knew what was possible if they adhered to regimens of right living and superconscious meditation.

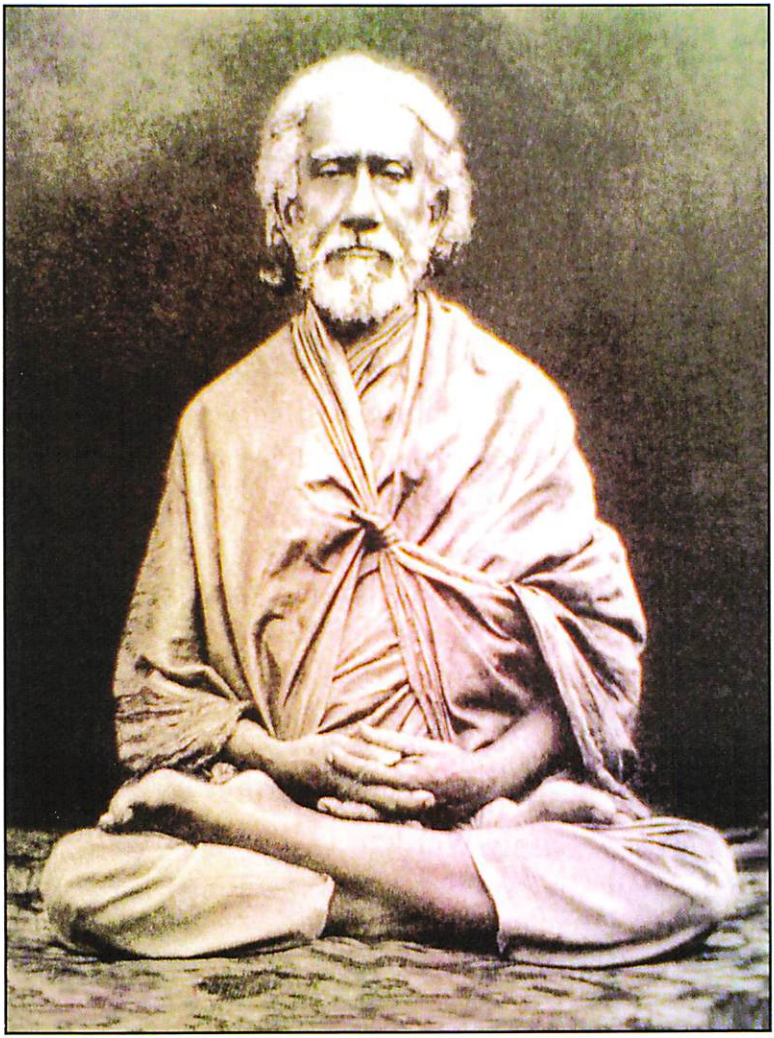
Sense attachments, cravings (persistent desires driven by restlessness or egocentric inclinations), fear, anger, and other distressing conditions must be absent rather than suppressed or controlled. If they are dormant and can be activated when we are tired or emotionally aroused, we are not free.

Delusions (false ideas) and tendencies to misbehave may also be stored as memories in subconscious levels of the mind and may be activated when we are tired, weak, emotionally unsettled, or confused. At such times we may think or say, "This not like me. I didn't know these inclinations existed in me." Then is the time to decide to renounce (release) them. Don't think that you cannot do it, are incompetent, or will take care of the situation later when you are less busy.

When our attention and awareness are associated with the front region of the brain, it is easier to concentrate, be decisive, make rational decisions, and control impulses. That is why we are advised to direct attention and awareness to the front of the brain when we sit to meditate and want to concentrate on making choices and solving problems. Elevating our attention and awareness to the front and higher regions of the brain can help us rise above and be detached from troublesome thoughts, feelings, and inclinations. We have the ability to control our states of consciousness, thoughts, moods, and behaviors.

When we resist and overcome harmful habits, mental and emotional states, impulses, tendencies, and subconscious influences, we become stronger and more Self-determined.

Superconscious influences that become increasingly influential as we become more spiritually aware, resist and neutralize harmful mental impressions and subconscious influences, enable us to more constructively use our creative abilities, and clarify our awareness.



SWAMI SRI YUKTESWAR
(1855 – 1936)

We Can Be Free From Conditions That Limit Us

We should constantly endeavor to be so spiritually aware that we naturally make right choices, live skillfully, and control our thoughts and behaviors. We can then be mentally and emotionally calm and appropriately responsive to events and emerging situations rather than unwisely, emotionally reactive even before we are Self-realized. Self-realization can then occur more quickly because usual restless movements and changes (*vrittis*) in our mind and awareness are reduced and subliminal impulses (*vasanas*) that activate them are quieted.

In stillness, the truth of our pure essence and of ultimate Reality can be revealed. When the mind is restless, emotions are unstable, and concentration is difficult, perceptions of our true nature and of higher realities are obscured or flawed. That is why spiritual teachers emphasize the practical usefulness of even-minded observation of events and experiences, mental and emotional calmness, and having well-developed intellectual and intuitive abilities.

Intellectual and intuitive abilities can enable us to discern the truth of what we examine and avoid being distracted by transient events or unsettled mental or emotional states. To overcome all obstacles to Self-knowing, use pranayama.

- Kriya pranayama that you were taught when you were first initiated quickly establishes attention and awareness in the front and higher regions of the brain and contributes to coherence or harmonious interactions between left and right hemispheres of the brain. It enlivens the chakras and during weeks, months, and years of regular, attentive practice improves the capacity of the brain to accommodate refined superconscious and cosmic conscious states.
- Alternate nostril breathing also results in harmonious interactions between both sides of the brain and is said to cleanse the channels (*nadis*) through which pranas flow.
- Observing natural breathing can focus attention and have a calming influence on the body, mind, and emotions.

When meditatively observing your natural breathing rhythms, be attentive to those intervals when a brief pause in breathing occurs, usually after exhalation. Notice that your awareness is more clear, without thoughts. To stay focused on the breathing rhythms it can be helpful to mentally speak a mantra or any word when you inhale or exhale, such as God, OM, peace, joy, or whatever pleases you. Sit still and do this for as long as you want to do it. Remember that the purpose of such practice is to calm the mind and clarify awareness. Physically relax and stay alertly attentive.

To cultivate inner stillness, speak calmly, cultivate Self-contentment, and avoid activities and situations that overly stimulate the senses, weaken vital forces, or activate harmful subconscious or addictive tendencies. Be peacefully Self-determined without dependence on outer circumstances or influenced by subjective (mental and emotional) conditions by being responsible for your thoughts, moods, and behaviors.

Instead of saying, "If I were spiritually enlightened, I wouldn't have problems or limitations," affirm:

> I am completely free from all problems and limitations because I think, feel, and live like a spiritually enlightened person while I quickly awaken to Self- and God-realization!

Guidelines regarding how a sincere truth seeker should act are described in chapter 17 of the Bhagavad Gita, verses 14 – 17. See my commentary, *The Eternal Way*, CSA Press.

> Reverence for enlightened persons, saints, teachers and wise people; purity; virtuous behaviors; inwardness; and harmlessness are physical austerities (disciplines).
> Agreeable, beneficial, harmless words and recitation of scriptures are disciplines of speaking.
> Peace of mind, gentleness, silence, self-restraint, and mental purity are mental disciplines.
> Those who practice these disciplines with highest faith without desire for reward, are sattwic [have pure minds and motives].

Similar guidelines are in the Pali Canon. Pali is an ancient language that was mainly used when writing Buddhist scriptures that describe teachings and practices. The following words are attributed to Siddartha Gautama of India (500 B.C.E.) who became known as a *buddha*, a spiritually enlightened person.

> This is the eightfold path ... right views, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right endeavor, right mindfulness, and right contemplation.

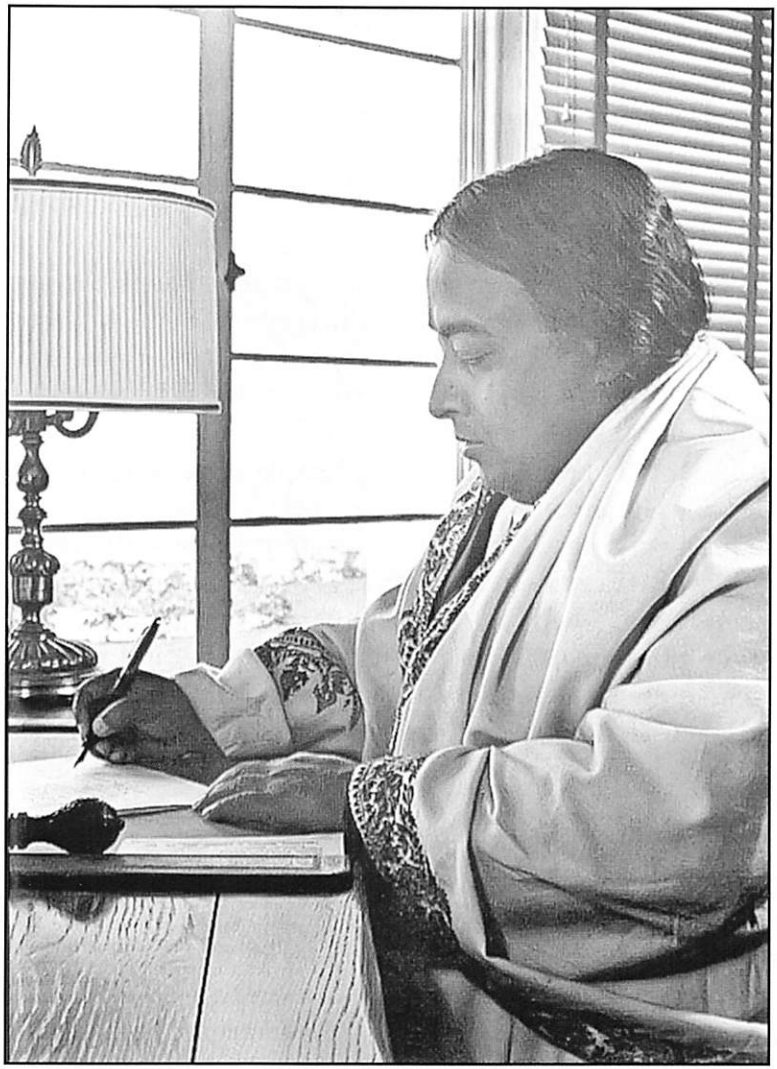
Notice the emphasis on doing things *right* to have ideal results. *Right* is included in definitions of the Sanskrit word *dharma*: principles, processes, and influences that maintain harmony and order. Right or *dharmic* mental attitudes and actions contribute to our well-being and the well-being of all processes and forms of life that are influenced by what we think and do.

Right thinking and behaviors help produce and maintain our peace of mind, emotional stability, and clarity of awareness that allow spiritual awakening to spontaneously occur.

An essential right mental attitude and state of awareness is *humility*: absence of egotism, an inflated sense of self-importance and pride supported by emotional immaturity. Patanjali advised not to be proud of spiritual attainments or abilities and all texts that describe classical Yoga systems mention the importance of not being anxious or concerned about the outcome of Yoga practice. When we do what is most helpful to weaken and neutralize troublesome conditions and elicit our innate divine qualities, success—spiritual enlightenment to the extent of liberation of consciousness—is certain.

Declare With Realization

> I reverently acknowledge the radiant splendor of ultimate Reality. Its pure essence within me illumines my mind, clarifies my consciousness, enlivens my body, harmonizes my circumstances, and beneficially influences everyone and all forms of life.



Encinitas, California, early 1940s

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA
(1893 – 1952)

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions, and Practices

e-mail questions or inquiries for possible use in future issues of *Radiance Newsletter* to rd@csa-davis.org

Is it important to do a specific number of kriya pranayamas? If it is, how many should we do?

New initiates are advised to do 12 repetitions for several weeks to become familiar with the procedure. Some kriya teachers say to do 2 or 3 before the 12 repetitions to become aware of the spine and get settled. After several months the numbers can be increased, usually to 24 for several months, 36 for several months, 48 for several months, 60 for several months, and so on. It is not important to adhere to specific numbers or to strive to do many of them. It is more important to have the results of attentive practice: mental calmness and superconsciousness.

Avoid being overly concerned about using kriya pranayama or other procedures. I receive inquiries regarding how to use them, usually from people who are not certain that they understand what to do, have talked with friends who were initiated, read books by other teachers, or have gotten information on the Internet.

I have known people who had done hundreds of thousands of kriya pranayamas over a period of several years who were not very spiritually conscious, were not well-established in a purposeful lifestyle, and didn't yet have an intellectual understanding of higher realities. They were sincere, devotional, and had good intentions, but were still overly identified with their mistaken sense of self-identity and personality characteristics.

The aim of our meditation practice should be to awaken through superconscious levels of awareness to experience our true nature, which is possible when mental changes stop or are transcended. Identification of attention and awareness with our pure essence is *samadhi* (*sam*, to hold together).

Mental impressions produced by samadhi resist, weaken, and dissolve harmful mental impressions and produce permanent, beneficial changes. When gross mental impressions are dissolved, constructive mental impressions also dissolve. [Transcendent] samadhi without the support of an object of perception is then firm.
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 1:50,51

Pure, stable Self-realization permanently liberates us.

I would like to live in a community with other kriya yogis or be able to meet with some of them on a weekly or monthly schedule to enjoy their companionship and meditate with them. Would doing that be spiritually helpful?

It can be spiritually helpful if the purpose of being together is to uplift and encourage each other. If a strong need to have frequent emotional support, or to socialize, are the reasons for wanting to be with others, it would be better to cultivate self-reliance.

What does it mean to be a disciple? If I were your disciple or someone else's, what would I have to do or be expected to do?

The Latin origin of the word *disciple* means "learner." Discipleship is of great value when one sincerely wants to learn the facts of life and how to live effectively. Not all people who say they want to be a disciple have the intellectual capacity to learn or the willingness to be fully committed to a spiritual path. Besides sincerity, intelligence, and willingness, a disciple should be humble, respectful of the teacher and the teachings, disciplined, and firmly resolved to be spiritually enlightened in their current incarnation.

Learning and spiritual awakening may be slow, faster, or quick according to one's capacity to learn and have awareness clarified and the intensiveness (concentration) of their effective endeavors. Some disciples experience very rapid progress while progress of others may be slower and gradual. All sincere, right endeavors are of great value.

I have known people who seemed to be spiritually aware who, in later years, had dementia and severe memory loss. Will their awareness be more clear and their memories better in an astral realm when they leave the body?

Memories are mental impressions (*samskaras*) that are also associated with various regions of the brain. Electrical stimulation of the brain can elicit memories along with vivid perceptions of what occurred when memories were recorded.

When memory loss is due to brain-related problems, mental impressions of experiences and perceptions are retained in the mind, which survives our physical demise.

Spiritual enlightenment and liberation of consciousness seems far beyond my current capacity to experience. Should I aspire to that realization or should I be satisfied with modest degrees of spiritual awakening and well-being?

Yes, aspire to that realization. You are destined to have it. Improve your capacity to be more conscious. Be curious about where you came from, why you are on Earth, what your future will be, and the purposes of life and its processes.

Appreciate and enjoy spiritual awakening experiences and conditions that provide for your well-being without being so satisfied that you lose interest in continued awakening. Look forward to the ultimate degree of spiritual enlightenment and prepare for it.

Decide what you can and will do now to allow your innate qualities and knowledge of higher realities to emerge. The full potential to be fully conscious is already within you. Learn to let it be expressive.

Imagine that you are now fully spiritually enlightened and free. Doing that can prepare your mind and awareness to be receptive to spiritual awakening and motivate you to think and act constructively.

Estimate how many years remain in your current incarnation, then decide what you will do within that period of time to be fully spiritually awake.

Why do some meditators have dramatic experiences while others have brief insights or extended sessions of mental calmness?

Meditative experiences can be influenced by physical states and psychological temperaments. People whose vital forces are easily aroused or who are extremely devotional may experience pronounced energy flows or emotions that produce ecstatic sensations. Transcendent perceptions may evoke feelings of awe or wonder. Some people are more inclined to have useful insights that enable them to know their true nature and to comprehend higher realities and cosmic processes.

Sattwic influences can result in luminous perceptions of omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, and transcendence. *Rajasic* influences can contribute to dramatic perceptions of subjective light, mind-produced visions or hallucinations, and arousal and movements of life forces. *Tamasic* (inertial) influences can contribute to mental dullness, blurred awareness, sleep, and unconsciousness—as can inattentiveness and weak or unused powers of concentration.

In some yoga traditions, secrecy regarding what one is taught and what is experienced is recommended. Why?

The main reason is to encourage disciples to concentrate on doing what they are supposed to do rather than waste time and energy talking to others who are not interested in spiritual matters, cannot understand them, or should be concentrating on their own duties.

Most of the philosophical concepts and lifestyle and meditation practices are easily available in books, from teachers, and on the Internet. Millions of people use various yogic methods; very few practice yoga (samadhi).

Why don't enlightened people immediately awaken the spiritual energies of others, heal them, or dissolve their karma?

They cannot do it unless a person is receptive. I often saw Paramahansa Yogananda blessing and attentively talking with people who were not responsive.

One late evening in January, 1950, he returned late in the evening from visiting an older male disciple who was in a hospital because he had a serious respiratory illness. Master told a few disciples about what occurred at the hospital. He said, "I stood by his bed and asked, 'Do you want to be healed? If you do, tell me, and I will heal you now.' He said, 'No sir.' He was very weak. There was nothing I could do for him. It was a very sad situation."

When the man died a few days later, I cleaned his room in the men's dormitory building at SRF headquarters and packed his clothes and other personal items so that a member of his family could take them.

Some karmic conditions (subconscious influences, mental states, intentions, and expectations) can be changed when our states of consciousness, mental states, and behaviors become more constructive. Improved understanding of how to live effectively and how to resist and overcome karmic influences can neutralize those influences. Mental and spiritual attunement with Self-realized people can be transformative. Frequent, sustained superconscious meditation purifies all levels of the mind and refines the nervous system and brain.

Replace feelings and thoughts of helplessness with feelings of confidence and constructive thoughts of what you will do and accomplish. View obstacles and problems as temporary conditions to be confronted, overcome, or transcended. When you are more Self-aware, many of the conditions that were thought of as obstacles and problems will either be easily resolved or will no longer exist.

Affirm With Confidence

As a fully conscious spiritual being,
I live freely and enjoyably.

Sombrero Galaxy / NASA

Meditative Contemplation To Expand Consciousness and Provide Insights

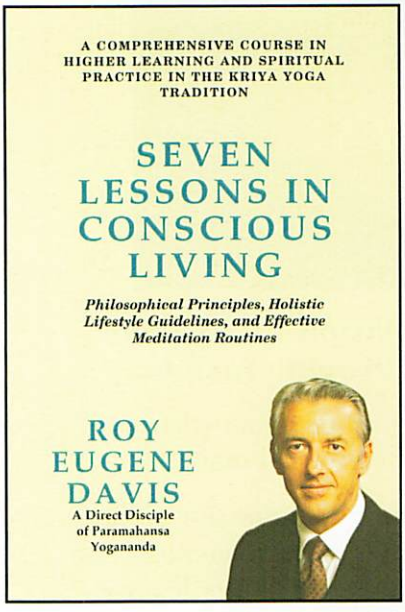
Contemplation is alert observation with expectation of having meaningful insights.

When meditating, occasionally imagine our galaxy and solar system floating in your consciousness. See our planet turning at a speed of 1,040 miles per hour (1,684 km) at the equator.

About 93 million miles (149 million km) from the Sun, the Earth travels in an orbit around it of almost 666 million miles (more than 1 billion, 69 million km) at a speed of 66 thousand miles (106,194 km) during 365 days.

It has been estimated that our Milky Way Galaxy, with billions of Suns, is moving in space at a speed of 44 thousand miles per hour (70,796 thousand km) and turning like a pinwheel at 600 thousand miles per hour (965,400 thousand km). Earth, about two fifths of the distance from the center of our galaxy completes a turn around the center in about two hundred thousand years.

After contemplating like this for a while, imagine our universe with billions of galaxies. Then imagine the Om vibration from which the universe is emanating, the source of Om, and that pure essence which is beyond it.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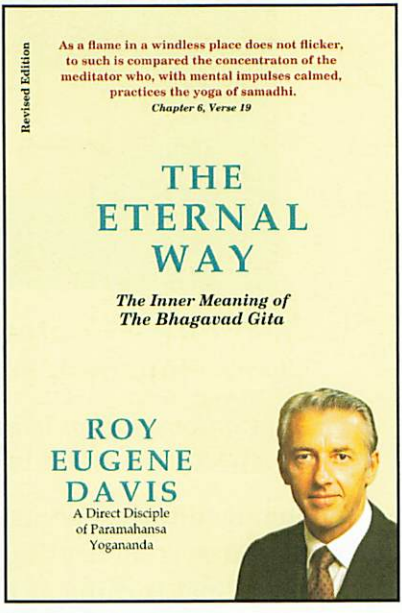
Revised Edition
As a flame in a windless place does not flicker, to such is compared the concentraton of the meditator who, with mental impulses calmed, practices the yoga of samadhi.
Chapter 6, Verse 19
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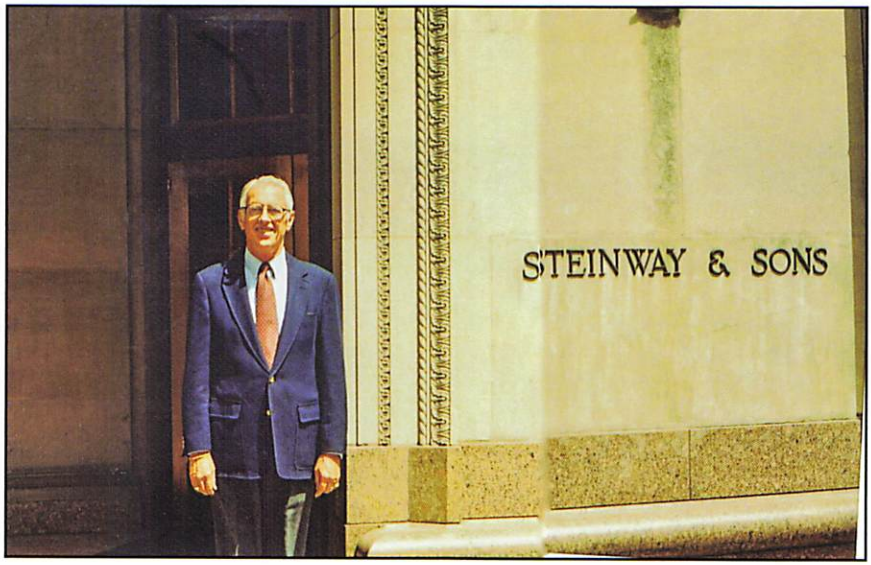

I am at the entrance of a lecture hall in New York City where I used to lecture on a regular schedule in the early 1960s. *Photo circa 2005 by Jeannette Wulff.*

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Look within; you will find everything [to be realized] there. Don't talk too much. Practice yoga [samadhi].
– Lahiri Mahasaya (1828 – 1895)
– Quoted by Paramahansa Yogananda during an informal talk on Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras, *August 11, 1946.*

The Consciousness Liberating Results of Dedicated Discipleship

Realization is direct experience along with knowledge of something. What is to be inwardly realized is our pure essence.

Avoiding excessive or unnecessary talking allows the mind to be peaceful. When wavelike movements activated by restless impulses from deeper levels of consciousness that stimulate the mind are stilled, Self-knowing occurs more easily.

The highest yoga practice is frequent superconscious meditation that culminates in transcendent samadhi (firm holding together of attention with our pure essence) that purifies our mind and awareness and enables us to no longer be influenced by false ideas, conflicted subconscious conditions, or environmental circumstances, including the subtle energy influences (*gunas*) that regulate the processes of Nature.

Why Discipleship is Necessary

A disciple (Latin *dicipulus*, student, from *discere*, to learn) who is sincere and sufficiently intelligent to understand philosophical concepts and guidelines for effective living and meditation practice can rapidly awaken to Self-realization.

People who are not prepared for discipleship may have the following problems:

- Unable to learn or are not willing to learn. Disabilities such as difficulty in comprehending written words and/or a short attention span may be overcome by listening to information rather than reading it and improving powers of concentration and perception. Resistance to learning can be overcome by being very curious, inspired, and motivated. Willingness to grow to emotional maturity and be responsible for what we think, do, and experience is important.

- Don't understand information; are despondent, moody, have doubts; and don't persist in the right ways.
- Try to cling to false traditional religious concepts or want to mix ideas and practices rather than concentrate on realistic practices that can produce desired results.
- Believe they cannot be spiritually enlightened. It should be understood that, because every person has a pure essence, their spiritual enlightenment is destined. It may be delayed but not avoided.

Other characteristics that prevent discipleship benefits are:

- Being satisfied with superficial knowledge, mental peace, or emotional calmness because of having partial understanding of higher realities or the side-benefits of meditation practice. What is needed is profound (in-depth) study and comprehension of higher realities and regular superconscious meditation that elicits refined states of consciousness and allows innate Self-knowing to emerge.
- Thinking that disciplined lifestyle regimens, metaphysical studies, and devotional rituals are indications of spiritual growth—that what is done is more important than what is to be accomplished.
- Being inclined to try to understand the meaning of life and higher realities rather than to have actual realization.
- Mental perversity: an inclination to distort what is learned to satisfy one's desires or whims.
- Lack of respect for one's spiritual teachers or the tradition of teachings.
- Allowing addictive tendencies, laziness, procrastination, subconscious influences, and other harmful habits or conditions to determine thoughts, moods, and behaviors.

As I read Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi* in the spring of 1949, I immediately recognized that he was my guru and the Kriya Yoga tradition was my spiritual path. When I met him at the Self-Realization headquarters early in the evening of December 23 of that year, a mental and spiritual connection was immediately evident. I didn't have to wonder if I was where I should be in the Cosmic Order; being with him was familiar and natural. I found my spiritual home.

In 1950 my guru told me, "You, and others, came to help me with my work." In late 1951, when he ordained me, he put his hands on my head and emphatically said, "Teach as I have taught and initiate devotees of God into Kriya Yoga"—which I have done for 65 years. When a brother disciple who witnessed my ordination asked our guru if I could really initiate others, he said, "You, too; the same God that is in me, is in you. What I have done, you should do!"

Of the more than fifteen thousand people I have initiated, some have died because they were older than me when I knew them; many others stopped practicing or became disinterested; several hundred have stayed on their spiritual path for many years and have had benefits from their dedicated endeavors.

The function of a yoga guru (teacher) is to educate students (disciples) who are receptive to learning and encourage them to effectively live and nurture their spiritual well-being. My guru said that although he freely "gave everything" to disciples, they had to learn to be receptive to what he taught and to the spiritual energy and good will that he radiated.

Having an intellectual understanding of basic philosophical concepts, lifestyle regimens, and spiritual practices is helpful; using what is learned, skillful living, and concentrated meditation are the transformative procedures (kriyas).

Remember that *complete* Kriya Yoga practice is more than using meditation techniques to calm the mind and concentrate better. *Complete practice* includes mental, emotional, and behavioral disciplines; concentrated Self-study (inquiry into our essence or true nature with discrimination and contemplative meditation); and transcending a mistaken sense of self-identity (ego) as explained in *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras (2:1)*. Patanjali recommended surrendering egocentric mental attitudes and states of consciousness to the aspect of ultimate Reality which he defined as the lord or ruler-regulator of cosmic processes (Sanskrit *Ishwara*). The pure essence of ultimate Reality which is individualized as souls is said to be the real guru or teacher because complete knowledge of ultimate Reality in that essence is revealed as we become more spiritually aware.

Surrendering ego to our enlightened consciousness or pure essence is also emphasized in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Our essence is a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality which is commonly thought of—and referred to—as God. When enlightened spiritual teachers tell disciples to "surrender to God" they mean to detach attention and awareness from a small sense of self and identify with their true nature as a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality.

Thinking and feeling that we are small, confined units of awareness is an intellectual error: the basis of other mental attitudes and states of consciousness commonly experienced by people whose awareness is ordinary (modified, conditioned, and blurred). Awakening from that condition can restore our consciousness to its original, pure wholeness.

Knowing that our essence is always pure and changeless, we can know that spiritual enlightenment is *conscious experience of what we are* rather than a state of consciousness to be created or attained by heroic endeavors. Being aware of this fact can empower us to do practical things to clarify awareness while being motivated to persist in the right ways to awaken to Self-realization.

Effective discipleship requires diligent actions that enable us to accomplish four basic aims of life. They are to:

- Live in harmony with others and events and circumstances by cooperating with spiritual, mental, and physical laws of cause and effect; bringing forth and expressing our innate qualities and abilities; and discovering our "right place" in the universe.
- Have needs, life-enhancing desires, and purposes that are of real value to us and others easily fulfilled.
- Be sufficiently prosperous to easily do what we want or need to do.
- Be spiritually enlightened to the extent of liberation of consciousness. When we are Self-realized we may have subconscious conditions which are troublesome and false ideas and opinions. In the course of time, superconscious influences and our discernment will purify our mind and awareness.

Discipleship doesn't require a monastic environment or a lifestyle that outwardly, too obviously, sets us apart from others. What is most useful to steady spiritual awakening is serene inwardness and fewer emotional outward involvements that stimulate the senses, arouse emotions, and cause restlessness and mental confusion.

> The mistaken sense [ego] of Self disappears when distinctions between modified states of awareness, influences of *sattwa guna* [luminosity], and one's pure essence are seen [perceived or known].
> – *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 4:25*

When all emotional and mental modifications are quieted or transcended, the energetic influences (*gunas*) in Nature may continue to influence our awareness. When the energetic influences of *rajas guna* (restless movements) and *tamas guna* (inertia) are transcended, the energetic influences of *sattwa guna* may still be present. Even though sattwic influences are constructive, they are external to our essence, to us, and will eventually be perceived as such and transcended.

Note: If you are not inclined to want to know the meaning of many Sanskrit words, know a few, such as:

- *Samadhi*: holding together attention and awareness with an object of meditative contemplation; also transcendence.
- *Yoga*: unifying or joining attention and awareness with one's pure essence, the same meaning as samadhi. To "practice Yoga" is to experience Self-realization or pure consciousness rather than only be engaged in preliminary procedures, such as asanas (postures); pranayama; rituals; or various forms or techniques of meditation. All useful preliminary procedures should eventually be transcended. Example: after our effective use of a meditation technique has calmed our mind, we can disregard the technique and rest in tranquil silence, the beneficial "after-effects" of right endeavor.
- *Sutra:* thread, a concise statement, a part of a larger body of literature or teaching.

- *Chakra*: wheel, circle. Verb-root "to move." One of five vital astral (energy) centers in the spine, one between the eyebrows, and one in (and above) the higher brain. They are places through which prana flows into the body and upward during meditation when attention is internalized.

- *Kundalini*: coiled, winding, spiral. Verb-root "to burn." The mostly dormant (in people who are not spiritually conscious) soul or life force aroused in the lower chakras by spiritual aspiration. It may contribute to spiritual awakening when it is aroused by innate urges to be more conscious, by contact with someone who is spiritually conscious, or influences of a sacred place (used for devotional and/or spiritual purposes).

- *Karma:* causes of effects which may be subjective mental or emotional influences or obvious mental attitudes, desires, expectations, behaviors and/or intentional actions.

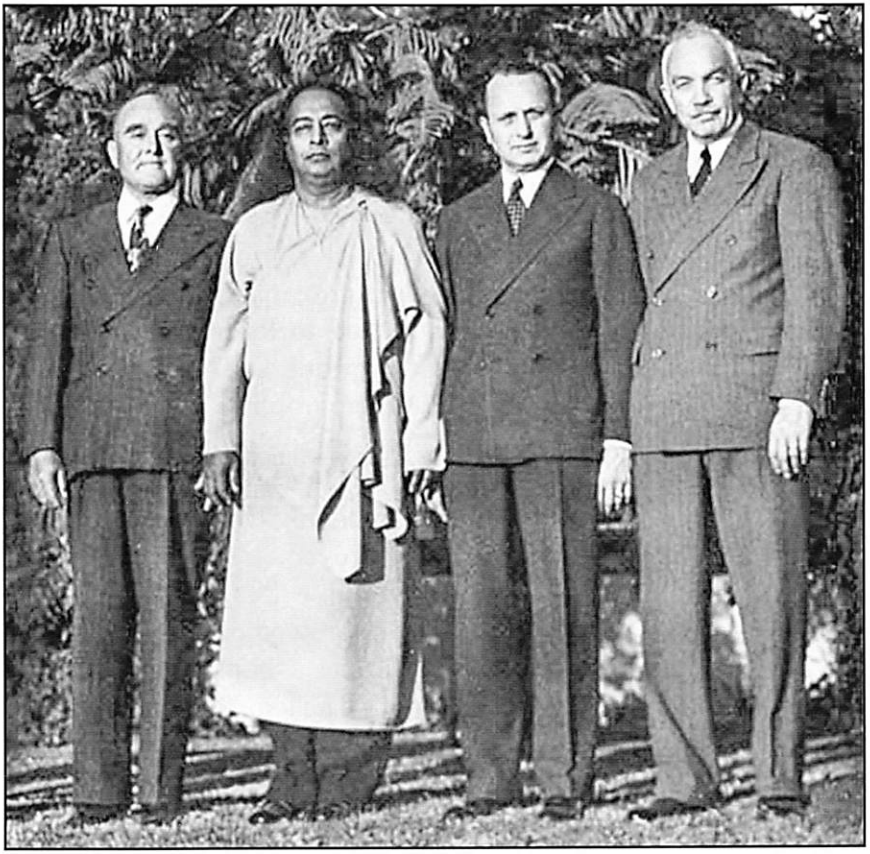
- *Guna*: a quality or attribute; an influence that binds or holds something together; characteristics in the expressive aspect of ultimate Reality, the Om vibration, and Nature.

- *Guru*: teacher. A sat-guru is a truth-teacher or revealer. *Sat* or "thatness" is truth; pure existence; reality; being; essence. A yoga guru may be a teacher who can provide information to disciples, transmit spiritual energy to them, or help them to be enlightened and liberated. Paramahansa Yogananda had all of those abilities.

Most people who came to my guru needed to be informed about higher realities, how to live, and how to nurture their spiritual growth. Some were able to receive his *shakti* (transmission of spiritual energy and consciousness). A few awakened to higher (clear) levels of spiritual awareness with his attentive guidance and blessings and their right endeavors.

Affirm With Conviction

I support my complete commitment to discipleship with right living, skillful actions, profound study of higher realities, and effective spiritual practices.



Left to right: James J. Lynn, Paramahansa Yogananda, J. Oliver Black, Dr. Minot Lewis. *Early 1940s*

Mr. Lynn, a Kansas City business executive, was chosen by his guru to be the President of Self-Realization Fellowship. Mr. Black, a business executive, later founded Song of the Morning Ranch, a yoga retreat in northern Michigan. Dr. Lewis. a dentist, met his guru in 1920 in Boston, Massechusetts.

Dialogue

Kriya Yoga Traditions and Practices

Send questions, inquiries, or themes—which may be used in a future issue of this publication—by regular mail or to rd@csa-davis.org

It seems to me that, although more people on our planet are now interested in spirituality, there are not many enlightened gurus to serve them.

Many people are only superficially interested in spiritual matters, don't yet have the intellectual capacity to understand higher realities, or are not committed to learning how to live right and nurture their spiritual awareness. The few gurus on our planet who are enlightened (or seem to be) only have a few disciples who are rapidly awakening to Self-realization. We are in the early stages of a 2,400 year cycle during which intellectual abilities of more people are increasing. In several hundred years, conditions will be much improved. If there were more enlightened teachers than are available today, most of what they taught and did would be misunderstood or ignored.

Many years ago, in India, a person asked a saint, "Where can I find a perfect master?" The saint asked, "Are you a perfect disciple?" Perhaps when there more sincere truth seekers, there will be more teachers available to work with them.

At our meditation seminars and retreats, I sometimes ask, "Do you practice meditation every day?" Among those who have been "on the path" for many years, only a few adhere to a daily meditation schedule. At retreats when we request silence or only necessary talking during and after meals in order to have a calm atmosphere, most people talk excessively and engage in nonuseful social interactions. They think and talk about their ordinary circumstances instead of "retreating" from them for a few days so they can be physically rested, mentally renewed, and spiritually enlivened.

Most people who complain about "lack of progress" on the spiritual path are not yet dedicated to right living and regular superconscious meditation practice.

Should I do many kriya pranayama repetitions daily to refine my nervous system and brain?

If you are comfortable doing two or three dozen repetitions, that is all right. There is no need to do hundreds. It is better to do them until your mind is calm, then stop, rest in silence, and contemplate Om and pure consciousness. Later, if your attention wanders, do a few more until you are calmly focused, or use another form of practice (prayer, affirmation, mantra, or breath awareness with or without a mantra). Stay alertly attentive when meditating. Be fully aware of what is perceived and experienced.

Our lineage of gurus advised disciples to meditate without being attached to the results of practice—to meditate skillfully and allow results to be what they are. We can then avoid being overly concerned about our progress or being despondent when progress seems slow or nonexistent.

It is common for unexpected, beneficial changes in mental states and states of consciousness to effortlessly occur when we are very calm.

A few people say they are mentally guided by Mahavatar Babaji and/or Paramahansa Yogananda to teach others. What should I think about this or say to others who ask me about it?

A few months before Paramahansa Yogananda left his body he told me, and a few other disciples who were present, that when he was gone some people would say that he and Babaji talked through them. He then said, "Don't believe them; we will never do it. No master does that."

Some people want to believe what they imagine. Some have neurological or personality disorders. Some lie to try to impress others and acquire a following.

Fluctuations and modifications in the individualized field of awareness can be restrained, restricted, and removed by meditation practice and objective detachment.
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 1:12

In the Bhagavad Gita (2:20) "the true Self" is said to be unborn, permanent, and ageless. What does "unborn" mean?

Units of the pure essence of ultimate Reality are individualized rather than created or originated by physical birth. Although we identify with and express through a physical body, it is not what we are. Before we are Self-realized we can sometimes be intuitively aware that we can observe our thoughts, sensations, and objective events but are not them. Also, as years go by, we can inwardly feel that we do not change.

Many years ago a spiritually enlightened man who traveled from India to England was told by a British philosopher, "You have no respect for time." To which the saint quietly replied, "You are a slave to time; I live in eternity."

When we are engaged in duties and relationships, it can be spiritually beneficial for us to remember that we are immortal, spiritual beings and will continue to live and creatively express long after we have departed from this world.

We should wisely plan for the near and far distant future rather than think in terms of our few years of physical experience as being all there is for us to know.

Note: Improve your understanding of your true nature by Self-inquiry with intellectual discernment and meditation practice and acquiring knowledge of higher realities. Read my books: *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living* (Kriya Yoga practices); *The Science of Self-Realization* (Yoga-Sutras); *Absolute Knowledge That Liberates Consciousness*; *The Eternal Way* (Inner Meaning of Bhagavad Gita).

When reading the *Bhagavad Gita*, see it as an allegory, a story in which characters, words, things, and actions are often symbols of moral and spiritual principles. The five Pandava brothers represent characteristics of five chakras in the spine; their one wife represents energies of kundalini; Krishna represents our enlightened consciousness which has all knowledge of the Infinite. Read the introduction in *The Eternal Way* to understand the basic theme.

Why do some Kriya Yoga teachers say the meditation techniques are sacred and not to tell others about them? I've seen them described on the Internet and heard them taught at Yoga centers.

Techniques are not sacred. Skillfully used they can enable us to have sacred (spiritually meaningful) perceptions. Telling people not to talk about them is sometimes done because what is learned should be applied rather than discussed—especially with others who are not sincerely interested or won't use them. Some teachers offer kriya pranayama instruction only to individuals who are sufficiently prepared to use it and are willing to fully commit to discipleship. Others are more liberal; they offer instruction to anyone who is sincere on a spiritual path, even to adherents of other religious traditions.

Lahiri Mahasaya initiated Hindu, Christian, and Muslim disciples. He advised them to read their scriptures and use the rituals of their faith if they wanted to do so, and practice kriya meditation methods to clarify their awareness. Paramahansa Yogananda taught meditation methods to many independent truth teachers and seekers without asking them to be disciples or members of his organization.

Master told the SRF Board of Directors that after he left his body they should "make Kriya Yoga initiation more important" so that members would be aware of the spiritual value of commitment to practice. Until then, many people studied with SRF until they were initiated, then mistakenly thought it was the final stage in learning and sought something else to study.

What Master meant when he said to "make initiation more important" was to more strongly emphasize what it should be, a "new beginning" that can lead on to higher realization rather than the final stage of learning and practice.

When I talked with Master in 1951 he told me that, when I conducted meetings, I should always include a long interval of Kriya Yoga meditation practice. He told me to do it because people usually forget what is said; they will seldom forget what is vividly experienced. Words can be informative and supportive; deep meditation can be transformative.

After one learns the meditation methods that are taught in our Kriya Yoga tradition, it can be helpful to use them as they were taught and to read information such as *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and the writings of our gurus. The reason for this is to focus attention on learning and practice and be spiritually and mentally attuned to the energy frequency and consciousness of our lineage of gurus.

People who think of this Kriya Yoga tradition and what is taught as just one of many interesting spiritual paths to try for a while may have some worthwhile results. Those who know it as a profound (in-depth) spiritual path that can enable them to experience rapid spiritual growth to the stage of liberation of consciousness—and remain focused on it—will derive the most benefit.

When I conduct a Kriya Yoga initiation service, I remember that I am not the originator of the information and blessing to be shared. I see myself as a conduit through which accurate information and the blessings of God through the gurus flow. I then endeavor to be mentally calm and have clear awareness devoid of personality influences. I don't think or imagine that I can make anything happen. I am there so grace can flow when the consciousness of those who are there is receptive to it.

I read that your guru often told people to meditate each day more deeply than they did the day before. How is that possible to do?

It isn't always possible. He said that to encourage people to endeavor to do it by staying intentional and alert. By having a regular, daily time scheduled for our meditation practice, we are more likely to anticipate doing it and be attentive to our practice. Passive, inattentive meditation may reduce stress but it won't result in superconsciousness.

Endeavor to awaken to superconsciousness during meditation—to peaceful mental alertness and clear awareness that enable you to be detached or removed from ordinary states of mind and awareness.

What are some of the most meaningful words that your guru spoke to you or to others?

Almost everything he said was meaningful, even when he made a casual comment, because he was always attentive and appropriate in his relationships with others.

I heard him speak at the SRF Temple in Hollywood, California, in 1950, just before he withdrew from public work and moved to Twentynine Palms, a little more than 100 miles from Los Angeles. He was at times forceful when explaining cosmic processes and the necessity of dedication to Kriya Yoga practices, then very quiet and intimate when encouraging people in the congregation to cultivate devotion and be compassionate when interacting with others.

During my private times with him, he encouraged me to constantly aspire to be spiritually enlightened and to persist in the right way. On one occasion he told me to heed the example of Anthony, an early Christian monastic who lived in seclusion for many years in Egypt until he had a dramatic awakening experience. He asked me how I was practicing the meditation techniques, then told me how to improve my practice. What he privately told me was always practical. Example: "You have to live your life; why not live it in the highest way?"

One evening when I was alone with Master he told me how he had helped James Lynn, his most spiritually advanced disciple, have his first transcendent samadhi experience. He then told me how he also helped Mr. Lynn, who was very wealthy, overcome his "last little attachment" to money.

Paramahansa Yogananda nurtured his spiritual awareness and endeavored to assist others to be more fully conscious. He constantly reminded people that their "real purpose" for being in this world is to awaken to Self- and God-realization. More influential than his words was his constant God-consciousness, how he lived, and what he accomplished.

Let your devotion to God be like a wood fire that burns steady and long; not like a straw fire that flares brightly then quickly goes out. – *Paramahansa Yogananda*

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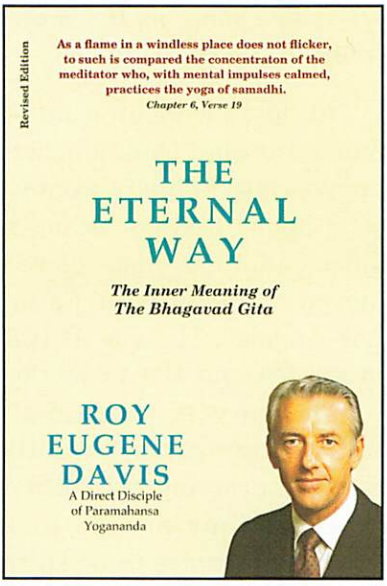
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As a flame in a windless place does not flicker, to such is compared the concentraton of the meditator who, with mental impulses calmed, practices the yoga of samadhi.
Chapter 6, Verse 19
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ROY EUGENE DAVIS
A Direct Disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda

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This *scripture of Yoga* describes several effective spiritual practices: the way of devotion; the way of intellectual discernment; the way of constructive, detached actions; holistic living; and superconscious meditation.

Krishna is our enlightened consciousness. *Arjuna* is every disciple (learner or student) on a spiritual path who must learn to acquire and wisely use higher knowledge and transcend the mistaken sense of self-identity to be spiritually enlightened.

*A story in which characters, things, and events represent moral and spiritual principles.

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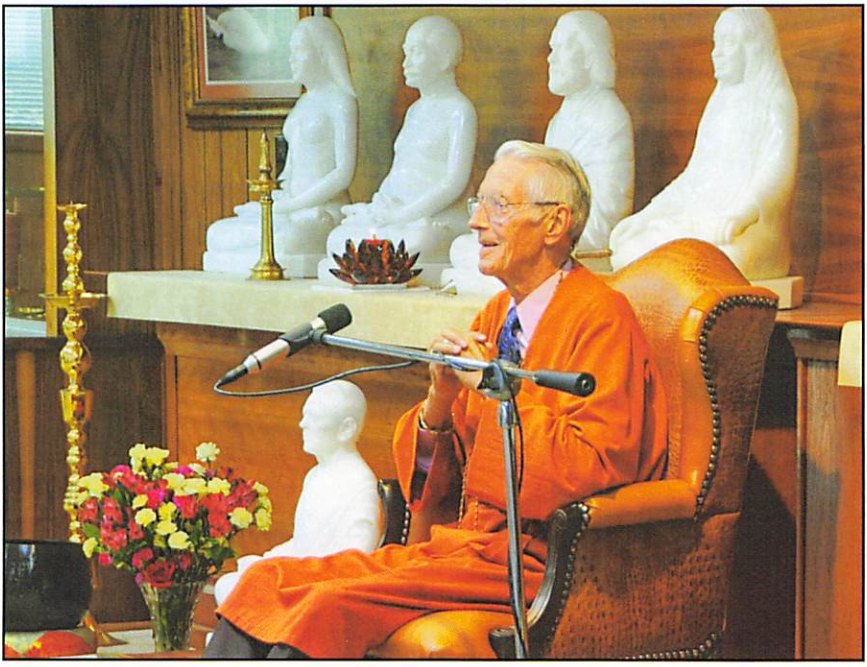

In the Meditation Hall at CSA Headquarters. *July 2015*

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Purification of the body can be done by natural means: of the electric [astral] sheath by cultivating mental and emotional calmness; of the magnetic [causal] sheath by pranayama; and of the mind by mantra.

– Swami Sri Yukteswarji (1855 – 1936)
Guru of Paramahansa Yogananda

Why Spiritual Awakening to the Stage of Liberation of Consciousness Should Be Our Ultimate Aim in Life

The cause of lack of spiritual awareness is intentional or unintentional identification with inertia (the *tamasic* attribute of primordial nature) to the extent of Self-forgetfulness. When this problem is known, we can choose to constructively think and act in ways that will enable us to be inspired and uplifted by purifying (*sattwic*) influences and doing practical things to have our consciousness restored to its original, pure wholeness.

When souls (units of the pure essence of ultimate Reality) become involved with material conditions they attract sheaths or coverings from the substances of the realms with which they identify. The first covering is said to be one which enables the soul to experience pleasure and assume a viewpoint of individual self-identity or "I-ness" referred to as the ego. Other coverings are provided as one becomes increasingly involved with various levels of cosmic manifestation.

In the second chapter of *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras*, a fundamental discipline recommended for practitioners of Kriya Yoga is cleanliness; not only in regard to personal physical self-care but also have the support of *sattwic* energetic influences until one is fully spiritually enlightened and those influences are no longer needed.

Purification of the physical body can be effected by having pure foods, appropriate exercise, adequate rest, natural light, fresh air, and a clean environment.

Purification of the astral covering can be effected by cultivating mental and emotional calmness and Self-contentment in all situations.

Purification of the causal covering can be effected by attentive practice of pranayama, of which alternate nostril breathing and kriya pranayama are very helpful. Pranayamas should be used even if such practice is not needed to calm the mind or improve meditative concentration. Attentive kriya pranayama also refines the nervous system and improves the capacities of the brain to accommodate clear states of consciousness.

Purification of the mind can be effected by attentive use of a mantra which may be mentally chanted or only "listened to" as it arises in one's awareness. Hearing, contemplating the significance of, being absorbed in, and transcending Om is highly recommended. All mantras derive their potency from Om. Meditating in that vibration provides direct contact with the Source of cosmic manifestation.

Our attention is often involved with our mind which is inclined to be outer-directed, recording impressions (memories) of perceptions that enable thinking and reasoning. The intellect enables discrimination or discernment of what is observed or analyzed. Providing the mind with a pleasing sound (a word, word-phrase, subtle inner sound, or Om) helps it to be calmly internalized so we can be more Self-aware, insightful, and free to contemplate higher realities.

Purification of energy and magnetic sheaths and the mind can also be helped by cultivating cheerful, optimistic feelings and mental attitudes. Confusion, doubt, worry, and thoughts or feelings of unworthiness or incompetence should be replaced with rational thinking, faith, courage, thoughts and feelings of self-worth, and inspired, skillful actions that can produce and attract ideal results.

Remember the Purpose of Kriya Yoga Practice

The purpose of Kriya Yoga practice (to know ultimate Reality by disciplined thinking and living, Self-inquiry with intellectual discernment and superconscious meditation, and letting go of false ideas about self-identity) is to weaken and remove conditions which interfere with or prevent spiritual awakening and *samadhi*: firm unification of attention and awareness with

our pure essence. (Yoga-Sutras, chapter two, sutras 1 and 2, in my book *The Science of Self-Realization*, CSA Press.)

We can easily know how sincerely committed we are to our spiritual path by being aware of our habitual thoughts, moods, private behaviors, and attentiveness to metaphysical study and meditation practice. If we allow thoughts and moods to be uncontrolled, behaviors to be erratic, and are not interested in learning about higher realities or how to meditate effectively, we are not sincerely committed to being Self-realized.

Even when we are sincerely committed to a spiritual path, until we are somewhat Self-knowing, we still have to use will power and intention to accomplish what we need to accomplish and make our mind and awareness receptive to superconscious and transcendent perceptions. That is why we need to adhere to self-care, lifestyle, metaphysical study, and meditation regimens. When we know what to do to clarify our awareness and awaken to Self-realization, we should do it. *Kriya* means "to do," to cause or allow to happen by actions or procedures.

When our attention flows to that which we want to realize and subtle vital forces are aroused, spontaneous *kriyas* (transformative influences) continue to occur when we are not meditating, quickening our spiritual awakening and clarifying our awareness. When we are aware of beneficial changes that are occurring, we should avoid thoughts, moods, behaviors, and relationships which might distract our attention or interfere with the natural flows of transformative influences. Thoughts or feelings of pride or superiority because of spiritual awakening and improved understanding or ability to meditate should be avoided. Humility, absence of egotism because of knowing (or knowing about) our true nature, allows spiritual awakening to more easily occur.

Speak With Firm Conviction

My constructive thoughts, feelings, and actions
confirm my dedication to my spiritual path.

Contemplation is examination of something with alert expectation of discovery. Contemplative meditation is described at the beginning of chapter three of *Patanali's Yoga-Sutras.*

1. Concentration is a steady flow of attention.
2. Steady concentration directed to an object of contemplation is meditation.
3. The self-shining of an object of meditative contemplation is samadhi [direct experience along with knowledge].
4. Concentration, meditation, and samadhi, together, result in mastery of attention and complete identification of attention and awareness with the object contemplated.
5. Mastery of contemplative meditation provides insight into what is examined and revelations of higher realities.

When meditating, be attentive to what you want to know or experience. Avoid allowing attention to wander, being passive, going to sleep, or being absorbed for a long time in pleasant feelings or moods that are mentally or emotionally enjoyable but don't improve your spiritual awareness.

Stages of Liberation of Consciousness

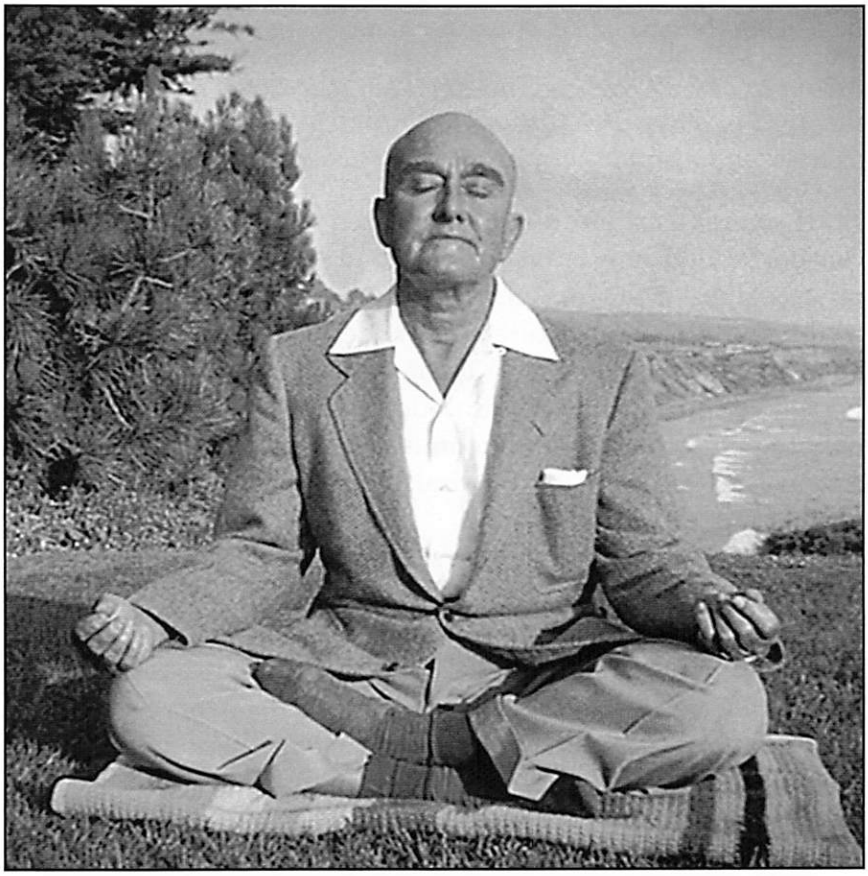
In the early 1950s, several disciples of Paramahansa Yogananda were invited to be with him in the chapel at Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters to commemorate his birthday (January 5, 1893). After a short meditation, during an informal talk he said, "Among those who are here now, there will be several *jivanmuktas* and a few *siddhas.*"

The sanskrit words *jiva*, soul, *mukta*, free, indicate partial or almost complete Self-realization with remaining *samskaras* (impressions) of troublesome subconscious influences and/or erroneous beliefs that are yet to be cleansed or transcended. A *siddha*, one who is "accomplished," is fully Self-realized: liberated from conditions that formerly confined or restricted his or her consciousness.

At the *jivanmukta* stage, one may return to former states of blurred awareness if subconscious influences and false ideas are not removed or transcended and behaviors are not entirely

constructive. We should not disregard metaphysical studies or spiritual practices until we know we are fully enlightened and freely functional.

A *siddha* is fully Self-realized and permanently free.



My guru privately told me that James J. Lynn, (*photo above*), a dedicated disciple and proficient meditator since 1931, would be liberated. Mr. Lynn was chairman of a bank in Kansas City, Missouri, owned two insurance companies, drilled for oil in Louisiana and Texas, and was president of SRF (March 1952 until his passing in early 1955). During his lifetime and in his will he donated more than five million dollars to SRF.

Kriya Yoga Traditions and Practices

Send questions, inquiries, or themes—which may be used in a future issue of this publication—by regular mail to me at Post Office Box 7, Lakemont, Georgia 30552 or to rd@csa-davis.org

I want to be Self-realized but am often distracted and become too involved in outer activities and relationships. How can I be more focused on improving my spiritual awareness?

If you really want to be Self-realized it will be much easier to concentrate on important matters and disregard activities and relationships which are of little or no importance to your total well-being. Don't just pretend to be devoted to a spiritual path; be completely committed to doing what you know is most useful for you to do. When you notice that you are being lazy or disinterested, renew your commitment and enthusiastically go forward. Attentive daily meditation will keep your awareness anchored in the Infinite.

During meditation seminars, when I sometimes ask participants to raise their hands if they adhere to a daily meditation routine, only a few indicate that they do it—even though some of them were initiated into Kriya Yoga methods many years before. Just as few people do what they should do to be more conscious, they often avoid practices that would help them be healthier, have peace of mind and satisfying relationships, and be more financially secure.

Read spiritual literature and acquire information regarding how to live effectively to be inspired and highly motivated to do what will be of greatest value for you. Inwardly ask, "What do I want to accomplish and experience in my current incarnation that will be of real value to me and benefit others who may be influenced by my mental states, states of consciousness, and actions?" Don't ask anyone for their opinion regarding your aspirations and inner guidance. While imagining what you are inspired to do, also be practical.

In my middle teenage years, I wanted to be enlightened and believed that it was possible. When I decided to go from Ohio to California and didn't have enough money to go by bus or train, I hitch-hiked to get there (which is not recommended today). A few months ago someone asked me if, when I was going to meet Paramahansa Yogananda in 1949, I had an alternative plan if he didn't accept as a disciple. I didn't have such a plan because I was committed to the Kriya Yoga path even before I met my guru in person. I didn't have visions or hear voices; I knew in the depths of my being what I was destined to do. Two years after I met my guru he ordained me to represent this tradition, which I have faithfully done for more than 64 years.

Most of the worthwhile ministry-related events that occurred during the past several decades "spontaneously" emerged as results of grace rather than as outcomes of what I tried to make happen. I have endeavored to do constructive things to provide spiritual education and encouragement for many people without being personally attached to my actions or the results. Conversion to the spiritual path cannot be forced, nor can we know whether or not a person will be committed to a spiritual path and have the benefits we would like for them to have.

We are *emotionally mature* when we accept responsibility for our thoughts, moods, private behaviors, overt actions, and the circumstances we create or attract.

We are *spiritually mature* when we know about ultimate Reality and our essence of being, the enduring value of being fully enlightened, and the necessity of complete commitment to an effective spiritual path.

We are Self-realized when we actually experience and know our true nature as pure consciousness rather than only think about or have vague ideas about it. Complete Self-realization liberates our consciousness.

We are liberated when the purity of our awareness is the same as the purity of our essence of being—which is a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality.

How can it be known if a guru (teacher) is authentic?

Observe their behavior and listen to what they say. Is what they do always ethical? Is what they say true? Are they kind and generous, or assertively controlling? Are they humble and helpful, or pridefully self-centered? Not everyone who appears to be holy is Self-realized. There are some authentic, competent gurus; some who are honest and have good intentions who can teach well but are not yet Self-realized; and some who are only pretending to be wise.

I have heard it said that truth seekers may be attracted to teachers whose psychological characteristics are like their own. Many years ago, at an ashram in south India, a wise guru was asked by a visitor, "Please direct me to a perfect master." The guru replied, "Are you a perfect disciple?"

In informal situations, an enlightened person may seem to be normal or ordinary when interacting with people whose mental attitudes and states of consciousness are ordinary. They do it to be appropriate and to communicate effectively.

When you are with an enlightened person, be calmly receptive to their clear state of consciousness and subtle spiritual energy that is present in the environment. When I was privately with Paramahansa Yogananda or my brother disciple James Lynn, I was always aware of a sense of omnipresence and spiritual power that was fully present and not obviously invoked or openly talked about. It was there in casual, informal situations without any dramatization of it. I discovered that being calmly, respectfully receptive enabled me to be more fully aware of it.

I also discovered that unusual meditative perceptions and being aware of a person's illumined consciousness and aroused spiritual forces, did not exempt me from having to be self-disciplined and to study higher realities, practice meditation, and learn to live effectively.

Although we can be helped by associating with enlightened people, we will have to do what is necessary for us to be spiritually enlightened.

Paramahansa Yogananda, late 1920s

I cannot do simple pranayama, including the kriya pranayama, because of a breathing problem. What can I do to encourage a flow of prana in the spine?

Do mental kriya pranayama. Mentally "see" and try to feel the current moving up and down several times, then residing in the crown chakra. Also, mentally chant Om at each chakra, ascending, then descending, feeling an enlivening of energy at each chakra. Conclude at the crown chakra, then flow into meditation, contemplating Om, then pure consciousness.

With or without pranayama practice, your true nature is pure consciousness. Contemplate it until you experience that you are pure consciousness. Before you experience it, continue to acknowledge and affirm it. Don't think of yourself as being other than what you are, or as weak, incompetent, or not intelligent. Paramahansa Yogananda told disciples:

> "I never allow the thought 'impossible' to become rooted in my mind. Nor should you."

If you sometimes have difficulty being optimistic and self-confident, affirm and assume the awareness of mental states, feelings, states of consciousness, and circumstances you want to have. You can then choose to create and attract ideal conditions and not be influenced by whims, moods, or outer events.

Affirm With Confidence

As an immortal, spiritual being, a flawless unit
of the pure essence of ultimate Reality, it is easy
to think creatively, be constantly inspired and self-motivated, and steadily awaken through the
stages of spiritual growth to complete and
permanent spiritual enlightenment.
What I can do, and realize, I sincerely wish
for everyone, everywhere.

Note: Use affirmations to elicit innate Self-awareness rather than try to condition subconscious levels of your mind. Subconscious and conscious levels of your mind will be purified as Self (soul) awareness increases and is more influential.

Besides meditation practice and study to acquire necessary information, what else can be done to help spiritual awakening be easier and faster?

Avoid thinking and acting as though your hoped-for future spiritual enlightenment will solve all problems and provide the ideal conditions you want to have.

Endeavor to live effectively; harmoniously accomplish purposes that are of value to your well-being and the well-being of others and the environment; have your wholesome desires easily fulfilled and your real needs satisfied; and to always have the material resources that are needed for your security, comfort, and freedom of expression.

As you become more conscious and knowledgeable, discover and wisely use exceptional powers of perception and skills to help yourself and others to have total well-being: to be healthy, happy, prosperous, and creatively functional. What you will be able to easily do and experience when you are Self-realized, endeavor to do now. By using knowledge and skills that you now have, you will become more knowledgeable and skillful.

As we go forward in our ascending era of increasing emergence of intellectual powers being unveiled in more people (according to Swami Sri Yukteswarji's theory of cosmic cycles), spiritual awakening of individuals will be more evident. When knowledge and skills are wisely used, spiritual awakening is faster.

Fearlessness, purity of thoughts and motives, abiding in yoga [Self-realization] along with that knowledge, charitable giving, self-restraint, study of sacred scriptures, disciplined thinking and behaviors, truthfulness, absence of anger, renunciation [of what is not needed or is harmful], freedom from finding faults in others, compassion for all beings, absence of cravings, gentle behaviors, modesty, steadiness of resolve and living; vitality, forgiveness, persistence in right resolve and actions, freedom from ill will and pride; these are the characteristics of those with a divine destiny. – *Bhagavad Gita 16:1–3*
The Eternal Way: Inner Meaning of the Bhagavad Gita, CSA Press

I have several unresolved mental and emotional conflicts that cause anxiety and interfere with my endeavors to do necessary things and meditate effectively. How can I solve this problem so that I can freely do what I want to do?

When your desire to do what you want to do is stronger than the habit of being preoccupied with subjective conflicts, it will be easier to live enjoyably and effectively. Discover why you are allowing thoughts and feelings to be involved with subjective conditions rather than doing necessary things.

Intentional, constructive thinking and living will weaken and neutralize troublesome subjective influences. Learn to let go of troublesome thoughts, memories, and feelings. Forgive others if you were hurt or rejected. Forgive yourself for your mistakes. Resolve or release conflicts rather than try to suppress them or pretend they don't exist.

Cultivate self-confidence. As a spiritual being, you can be superior to memories and emotions and choose mental states, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. To think that you are a victim of past events or experiences is a mistake. Mental and/or emotional conditionings (sometimes referred to as "karma" that causes effects) can be neutralized. Refuse to be controlled by them by living as a Self-determined spiritual being.

Regular superconscious meditation will purify your mind and enable you to experience your true nature. When you meditate, be alert and curious about what you are experiencing as mental and emotional calmness becomes more pronounced and awareness becomes clear. Want to have your attention and awareness removed from mundane conditions and subjective states to experience pure-conscious, joyous, being (existence).

How can I avoid being strongly attached to good relationships and ideal living conditions and still have and enjoy them?

Accept them as being natural reflections of your constructive mental attitudes and actions while knowing that they will not forever persist. All relationships and physical conditions change in the course of time. Enjoy what is supportive without being

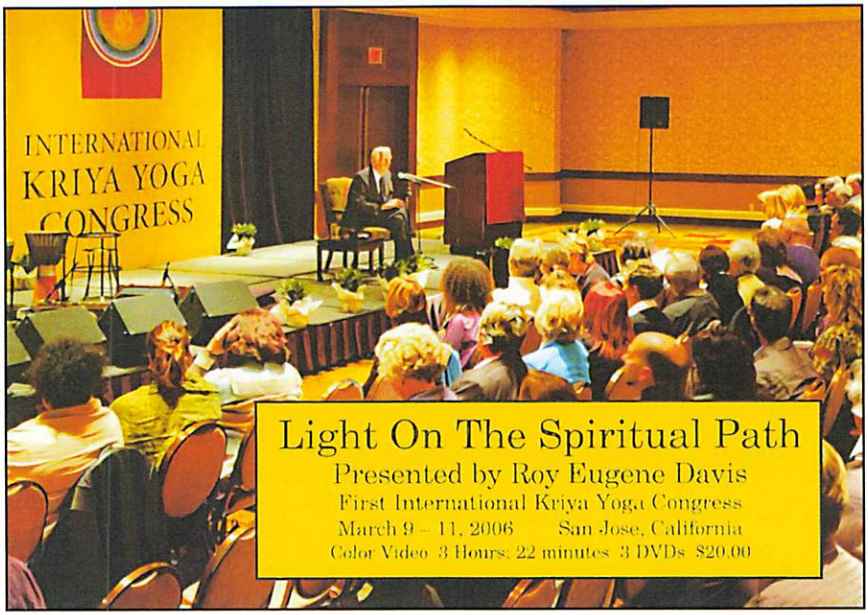
mentally or emotionally hurt or deeply disturbed when change occurs. There is no need to avoid good relationships or ideal living conditions because of knowing that they cannot be permanent. Being always established in Self-awareness is the key to wise, rational living. It is not necessary to dramatize detachment from physical relationships and conditions. Live well, and wisely, as a conscious, spiritually aware person.

When I was initiated I was told that I was being connected with the lineage of gurus. Although I like to think this is true, I don't feel a connection. How can I have an obvious mental and spiritual attunement with the gurus of our Kriya Yoga tradition?

A way to have an obvious mental and spiritual attunement with someone is to understand how they think and what they do. Read about our gurus in *Autobiography of a Yogi* and in my writings. Be thankful to them for having made the teachings of Kriya Yoga widely available in our current era. These methods have been known and practiced for thousands of years by small numbers of truth seekers. They are now accessible to anyone who sincerely desires to experience rapid spiritual awakening. Babaji permitted Lahiri Mahasaya to initiate others who would be sincerely committed to basic Kriya Yoga practices: constructive thinking and living; Self-inquiry with discernment, study, and meditation practice; and surrender of a mistaken, limited sense of self-identity that allows one's pure essence and ultimate Reality to be known. A spiritual force constantly flows through the consciousness of the gurus, which can be discerned and recognized as being unique. Different frequencies of force flow through representatives of other enlightenment traditions. We feel most comfortable and derive the most benefit when we are in tune with our own "spiritual family."

Affirm (Declare as True) With Conviction

Because I live in an infinite, ultimate Reality,
wherever I am, whatever I am doing,
I am always serenely peaceful,
whole, and fulfilled.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First International Kriya Yoga Congress
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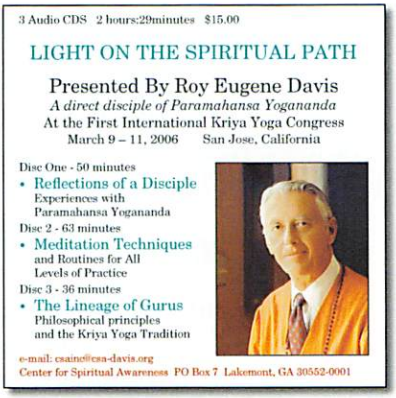
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Radiance

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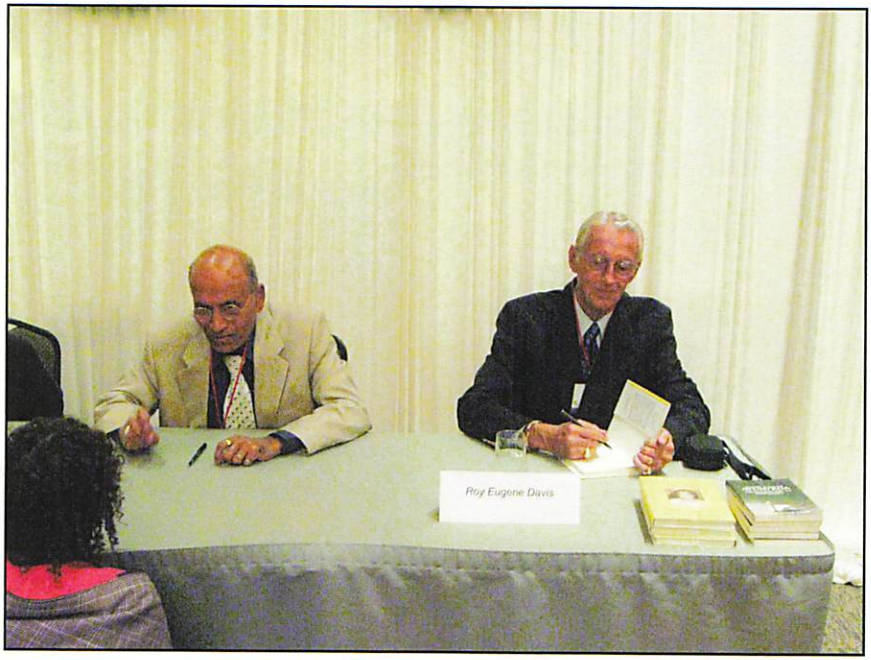

Signing books at the 2008 NAMA (National Ayurvedic Medical Association) Conference in Chicago, Illinois. Dr. Vasant Lad (left), director of Ayurvedic Institute, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Front cover photo: First European Kriya Yoga Congress, Milan, Italy. *April 2014*

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[Pure] yoga is realized when movements and changes in one's field of awareness stop.
– *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 1:2*

What We Need to Know and Do to Experience the Pure Yoga of Perfect Self-Realization

The second sutra (concise "thread" of a teaching) in Patanjali's text has been variously translated from Sanskrit during the approximately 2000 years after it was composed. Some have suggested that the movements and changes (*vrittis*) in one's field of awareness (*chitta*) that blur consciousness and prevent concentration should be restricted or suppressed. Although we may need to resist their influences in the early stages of our right endeavors, what is most useful when we aspire to be Self-realized is to have them be quieted so that our pure essence can alone be "self-shining."

Our field of awareness includes our mind, intellect, and sense of self or ego (which is usually modified and limited by *vrittis* and lack of Self-knowledge until we transcend it). Many who write or talk about the *Yoga-Sutras* translate *chitta* (individualized awareness) as mind or as feeling. Some modern scholars similarly mistakenly define the Greek word *psyche* (soul) as mind because they don't know what it is.

Until our field of awareness, including intellect and mind, is illumined or purified, three energetic influences (*gunas*) may affect it. *Tamas guna*, being inertial or heavy, blurs awareness and dulls the intellect.

When *tamas guna* and *rajas guna* (which supports activity and movement) are influential, the mind may be inclined to be outer-directed and interested in stimulation and activity. One of the mind's functions is to acquire and process information.

When *tamasic* influences are weak or absent and *rajasic* influences are dominated by *sattwic* (illuminating) influences, the mind is inclined to prefer peacefulness, harmonious conditions, higher knowledge, and freedom. When *sattwic* influences prevail over all other influences, spiritual enlightenment can

more easily occur and the Yoga (oneness) of Self-realization can be complete. Constructive living and regular, effective spiritual practices can contribute to mental and emotional peacefulness and clarity of awareness.

Gunas, Sanskrit for "threads" of cosmic energetic influences, are three attributes of the expressive aspect of ultimate Reality which make possible cosmic manifestation.

Sattwa (from *sat*, truth, reality) *guna* influences transform and illumine. *Rajas guna* influences empower movement or activity. *Tamas guna* influences are inertial like gravity; they resist or interfere with movement and illumination. Intellect and mind strongly influenced by the inertia of *tamas guna* cannot comprehend higher realities and are inclined to be strongly attracted to material conditions and superficial interests. This condition with corresponding behaviors is commonly experienced by many people—even by people interested in spirituality who are not sufficiently awake to transcend *tamasic* influences or change their habits and acquired behaviors.

Positive Pole	***— Interactions —***	***— Negative Pole***
sattwa guna	**rajas guna**	**tamas guna**
luminosity	**movement**	**inertia**

For information regarding possible energetic influences on thinking, mental states, moods, states of consciousness, and behaviors read chapter 14 (The Yoga of Discernment of the Qualities of Nature) in my book *The Eternal Way: The Inner Meaning of the Bhagavad Gita.*

How Right Living and Regular, Effective Spiritual Practices Can Reduce, Quiet, and Stop Changes and Movements in Our Mind and Awareness That Interfere With Self-Realization

Right living with emphasis on moral, constructive actions contributes to mental calmness and emotional stability that improves intellectual discernment, rational thinking, concentration, self-control, will power, and ability to choose states of consciousness.

Worry, insecurity, thoughts and feelings of unworthiness, fear, doubt, restlessness, and other mental or emotional problems activate movements and changes in our field of awareness and interfere with concentration. Although it is possible to detach attention from troublesome conditions when we prepare to meditate, it is usually difficult to do.

Effective spiritual practices—study of higher realities that provides information about them, prayer and meditation, and constant nurturing of awareness of our pure nature and ultimate Reality—purify the mind and consciousness and allow *sattwic* influences to prevail over *rajasic* and *tamasic* influences until *sattwic* influences are no longer needed. Then, perfectly Self-realized, we can be completely free: neither dependent on nor harmfully influenced by objective or subjective conditions.

The cultivation of patience (mental and emotional calmness and stability) in all circumstances and skillful use of effective forms of meditation (prayer, affirmation, mantra, pranayama, breath awareness, contemplation of Om, and others) can settle the contents of the mind and awareness, focus concentration, and allow Self-awareness to be vividly experienced.

Commitment to Spiritual Discipleship Can Result in Perfect Self-Realization That Liberates Consciousness

When we are fully committed to spiritual discipleship we willingly do all that is helpful to unveiling and bringing forth our innate qualities and Self-knowledge that makes it easier to comprehend ultimate Reality and its various processes.

Skillful use of discriminative intelligence and meditation practice are of equal value regarding awakening to Self-realization. Discriminative intelligence can provide knowledge of what is examined; effective meditation practice can provide actual experience of our true nature and ultimate Reality.

Aspire to have accurate Self-knowledge, comprehension of ultimate Reality, actual experience of your true nature, and the joyous freedom that can be yours.

Paramahansa Yogananda emphasized and exemplified the value of being both wise and Self-realized. When we are Self-realized it is easy to appropriately use knowledge in practical, useful ways. Until we are Self-realized, we can be inspired by the ideal behaviors of others, use common sense to think and act wisely, and remember the spiritual value of *sattwic* thinking, intentions, and behaviors.

Avoid thinking that spiritual matters are separate from or different than secular matters. Consider what you think, feel, and do as spiritual actions and your circumstances and relationships as spiritual situations and experiences. Doing that will quicken your spiritual awakening. It will also solve the problem that some people have of mistakenly thinking that they "don't have time to cultivate spiritual awareness or try to know their relationship with the Infinite."

One Reality emanates, pervades, and maintains universes. Because we are individualized units of its pure essence, when the purity of our essence and our awareness is the same, our Self-realization is complete. Don't think that you are separate from ultimate Reality (God) or have to establish a connection with it, strive to be one with it, attract its attention, or please it with your thoughts and behaviors.

When you don't need a ritual or meditation technique to calm your mind, sit still and contemplate (examine with alert expectation of discovery) your changeless, pure essence behind your thoughts, emotions, small sense of self, and personality characteristics. Stay calm and alert. Eventually, your innate urge to be fully conscious will be influential and insights will effortlessly occur. If you need something to be aware of when doing this, listen to (or imagine that you hear) Om, the omnipresent vibration of the expressive power of ultimate Reality.

Upon awakening to Self-knowledge, there must not be any pride of accomplishment or [lingering] attachments to former states of consciousness [or memories of perceptions or experiences] that might cause a return to those former states.
– *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 3:52*

Paramahansa Yogananda, early 1930s

Kriya Yoga Traditions and Practices

Send questions, inquiries, or themes—which may be used in a future issue of this publication—by regular mail to me at Post Office Box 7, Lakemont, Georgia 30552, or to rd@csa-davis.org

I was initiated a few months ago and am not able to frequently attend CSA retreats or talk with you in person. How can I have the information and guidance I think I sometimes need?

Read my book *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*, commentaries on the *Yoga-Sutras* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, and other writings. Also listen to my video and audio talks. It isn't difficult to have access to reliable information. What is needed is to live right and regularly superconsciously meditate.

Are our meditative perceptions related to the chakras on which we concentrate when meditating? Is it necessary or important to see the "spiritual eye" as a gold circle, blue field, and brilliant white center?

Chanting Om at each chakra and feeling their energies being aroused can help to internalize attention. Yogis usually recommend being aware in the front and higher regions of the brain when meditating, to focus attention and elevate it above thoughts and emotions. If the "spiritual eye" light (or another pattern of light) is seen, it can improve concentration. Look at it and be attracted to it. If you see light, explore it. If you don't see it, remember that it is more important, and liberating, to have clarity of awareness and knowledge of your true nature and ultimate Reality. Some people who say they have perceptions of light and other interesting meditative experiences are not always calm, insightful, or psychologically stable.

The discerning devotees sees the same ultimate Reality
in all people and creatures, with no exceptions.
– *Bhagavad Gita 5:18*

Why does information that some spiritual teachers write or talk about seem to be a mixture of facts, opinions, and fantasy?

Because it is. Even if they have good intentions, they may not know the difference between truth and untruth. Some people who experience superconscious meditative states resume a conditioned state of consciousness after meditation or allow traditional ideas to determine what they think and say.

Carefully examine what you read or hear. Ignore what is not true. Don't be an naive believer.

Why don't the endeavors of spiritual teachers who are said (by them or their followers) to be avatars result in global spiritual awakening and universal peace and harmony?

The avatar idea is that, from time to time, especially when constructive influences need to be more obviously influential, spiritually awake souls incarnate to teach people how to think and live more effectively. A few may be widely accepted as enlightened teachers or role models; most are soon forgotten. It is not easy to neutralize or overcome spiritual ignorance and inertia that pervades the collective consciousness of the human beings who live on our planet.

The "universal avatar" idea is that impersonal influences that contribute to spiritual awakening of people become more pronounced during certain eras or time-cycles. During the current 2,400-year era which started after 1600, electricity and magnetism was discovered and began to be creatively used. Although millions of people are interested in spirituality, perhaps fewer than 20 percent of the people now on Earth can intellectually comprehend higher realities and fewer still can be Self-realized.

In India, where the avatar-idea is widely known, hundreds of thousands of people often visit ashrams where saintly people lived or their body is buried rather than concentrate on their own spiritual awakening to liberation of consciousness.

In some enlightenment traditions it is said that the teacher directs people's attention to the Source; disciples often make the mistake of directing attention to the teacher.

Explain about allowing spiritual awakening to spontaneously occur instead of trying to make it happen.

Although intensive (focused) right living, study of higher realities, and meditation is recommended, it should be known that such actions (*kriyas*) are for the purpose of weakening and removing restrictive subjective (mental and emotional conditions) so that our innate qualities and higher knowledge can be allowed to emerge. (*Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 2:1* in *The Science of Self-Realization.)*

Many spiritual aspirants don't understand that their brain, nervous system, mind, and consciousness must be receptive to superconscious and transcendent perceptions. Mildly praying or hoping to have ideal results won't produce or attract them.

Even though I regularly read to acquire more knowledge about philosophical concepts and spiritual practices, meditate daily, and endeavor to live a good life, I haven't had obvious improvement in understanding, spiritual awakening, or circumstances.

Try to understand what the authors intended to communicate and discern what is true. When reading the *Yoga-Sutras*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and information about categories and processes of cosmic manifestation, an intellectual understanding is helpful. Intuitive insight is more revealing. Direct, accurate knowing is soul-satifying.

When meditating, stay alert and attentive. Gently aspire to vividly experience your pure-conscious essence and patiently wait and observe what you experience.

Live in the right ways because that is the how to effectively live. Don't expect to be rewarded for right living; the benefits of right living should be improved well-being and steadily improving ability to live enjoyably and skillfully.

If you are becoming more mentally competent, emotionally stable, intellectually and intuitively discerning, and kind and compassionate, you are being more spiritually conscious even if you don't have unusual perceptions or experiences. Continue to be firmly committed to your studies and practices.

I feel that I need some involvements or relationships that might help me feel more mentally and emotionally peaceful and stable. I am thinking about attending services and/or classes at a traditional Christian church, a new thought or new age center, or a Buddhist meditation center. Would that be good to do?

Do what seems best for your well-being and peace of mind. Avoid making emotion-driven decisions or allowing yourself to be distracted from important studies and meditation. The solution to your situation is not "out there"—it is within you. Find out what you really should do for your highest good.

I would enjoy having one or more friends who share my interest in spiritual study and meditation, but don't know anyone in my community with whom I might have such a relationship. How might I attract someone whose interests will be compatible with mine?

Meditate deeply to be more spiritually awake and able to live with a clear sense of purpose that is of value to you, others, and the environment. Allow personal relationships to be what they will be. If you have enjoyable, satisfying relationships, be thankful. If such relationships are not had, don't be unhappy or emotionally disturbed.

After a few years of attempts to practice kriya pranayama, I still don't feel a strong flow of current in my spine. Nor have I been successful in being able to experience tranquil awareness without restless thoughts coming and going in my mind. What can I do to have better results?

Cultivate more awareness of your spine until you can *feel* it. Imagine the central channel (*nadi*) and two channels (left and right sides) through which life force (*prana*) flows. When doing kriya pranayama, imagine and *feel* a current of life force flowing upward to the front region of the brain and into the top of the brain. Inhaling with a suction effect in the throat and directing the cool sensation in the throat (caused by air moving through the moist lining of the throat) to the spine should enable you to

feel a surge of current flowing up through the spine. You may also feel a mildly "cool" sensation with the flow. When exhaling, let the current descend with a soothing feeling of warmth.

Kriya pranayama will internalize attention so that clarity of awareness is easier to experience. Breath awareness, with or without a mantra, is also a helpful way to experience clarity of awareness.

For several years I have had weak powers of food digestion and assimilation. I was advised by a doctor to include some animal-source protein in my diet. It has helped me to feel better but I have thoughts and feelings of guilt. What should I do?

Do what provides the best results. Avoid thoughts and feelings of guilt. Such a helpful, modest adjustment of your diet will not interfere with your spiritual awakening or awareness.

I am thinking about getting married. Will doing it distract me from my spiritual practices?

Only if you allow your attention to be distracted and your studies and meditation practice to be neglected. You can enjoy a satisfying, mutually supportive relationship and accomplish all worthwhile purposes while steadily awakening to complete, perfect Self-realization.

Why can some people be assisted by a guru (teacher) to have a transcendent state of consciousness while others cannot?

When a disciple is receptive, an enlightened guru (teacher) may, by intention or transmission of soul force (*shakti*), assist a disciple to be superconscious or have a transcendent realization. If the experience could be caused to occur without a disciple's nervous system and awareness being receptive to it, gurus who have that ability would immediately do it for all of their disciples. Being with Paramahansa Yogananda and his most spiritually advanced disciple, James Lynn, allowed me to experience the benefits of the transformative influences of their energy and the purity of their consciousness.

What did Paramahansa Yogananda say and do to spiritually educate his disciples and awaken and elicit their innate Self- and God-awareness?

Being established in Self-realization and being kind and thoughtfully appropriate in any situation was a direct way he influenced disciples and provided them opportunities to see what being Self-realized was like. What he said, whether with intentional emphasis or in a casual way, was informative.

When meeting informally with a few disciples, he quietly remarked, "Krishna said, 'All of my soldiers [yogis endeavoring to overcome troublesome influences of an undisciplined mind] are like me.' " Master was letting us know that he wanted us to be like him; that we should aspire to be spiritually conscious, wise, and competent.

A young man who had been a disciple for two years said, "Sir, it's easy for you to do what you ask us to do because you are a master." Our guru replied, "I did what I had to do!" After a short pause, he said, "I only tell you what to do because I want you to be as strong as I am."

A disciple asked, "What did your guru Sri Yukteswar do for you?" Master said, "He made me what I am. His training was very strict. I told him, 'Regardless of how hard you discipline me, you will never get rid of me.' I needed it to balance my personality to prepare to come to America and do the work I came to do."

When I was privately with Paramahansaji he encouraged me to be steady on the spiritual path, cheerful, and have good manners when interacting with others without becoming too involved in nonuseful relationships or activities. He advised me to avoid excessive and superficial talking. He emphasized the importance of mental and spiritual attunement with him and our lineage of gurus and of constant aspiration to be Self- and God-realized. He told me to have spiritual enlightenment to the stage of liberation of consciousness as my highest aim, and that I could, and would, experience it.

He was always established in the Infinite.

Is it helpful to wear a ring with gemstones recommended by a vedic astrologer or a bangle (such as one made with copper, silver, and gold wires as recommended by Sri Yukteswar)?

They may be helpful, but there is no definite way to know. If wearing a ring with one or more prescribed gemstones and/or a bangle inspires a person to be more optimistic, it can be helpful. It may also be a reminder to cultivate harmonious relation-ships with nature's forces and other people. When given or recommended by one's guru or someone whose trustworthiness is highly regarded, it may help to improve mental and spiritual rapport with that person or that person's teaching tradition.

Detailed information about using gemstones and metals is in my book *An Easy Guide to Ayurveda*. Read pages 129–156: The Inner World of Colors, Gemstones, Metals, and Mantras: Their Special Qualities and Beneficial Applications According to Ancient Traditions and Modern Discoveries.

What is a useful general purpose pranayama to use, besides the kriya pranayama learned when initiated into our Kriya Yoga tradition?

Use *nadi shodana* (prana channel cleansing) before meditating or anytime by breathing through alternate nostrils.

Inhale and exhale.

Close the right nostril with a finger and inhale through the left nostril medium deeply.

Pause for a moment, close the left nostril, exhale through the right nostril.

Inhale through the right nostril.

Pause for a moment, exhale through the left nostril.

Continue 10, 15, or 20 times.

This balances flows of air through both nostrils and prana through the two channels along the spine, and improves harmonious interactions between the hemispheres of the brain. It can then be easier to be both relaxed and attentive when meditating.

After a friend died about six months ago, I often thought about him and wondered about his well-being. A few days ago, when I was sitting quietly, I "felt" his presence and mentally "heard" him say that he was all right and happy, and that I should not be concerned about him. Could that have been real communication from him or did I just imagine it?

Such experiences are usually produced in our mind as fulfillments of hopes or desires. We want to believe and our mind creates emotionally satisfying feelings and thoughts. It can be a way of adjusting to difficult or painful situations so we can continue to live with an optimistic mental attitude.

If we think we had an interdimensional communication, we will eventually be able to intuitively know the truth about it.

I am sometimes told by people I meet or who e-mail me that Paramahansa Yogananda talked to them in a vision while they meditated, in a dream, or by mental telepathy.

Some people say that Paramahansaji or other "masters" talk through them. A few weeks before my guru passed, he told me and a few other disciples not to believe such claims because neither he, Babaji, or any other (spiritual) master would do it.

The devotee who is free from the influences
of the gunas and is stable in the oneness of
Self-realization is prepared for the final,
transcendent stage of spiritual awakening.
Ultimate Reality is everlasting, unchanging,
and the abode of eternal joyous existence.
– Bhagavad Gita 14: 26,27

Genoa, Italy 2017 April 7,8,9

2nd European Kriya Yoga Congress

A Meditation Seminar and Kriya Yoga Initiation with Roy Eugene Davis, disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda

Other speakers: Ellen Grace O'Brian; Ron Lindahn, U.S.A.; Furio Sclano, Claudio Massettini, Barbara Zanella, (Associazone Centro Kriya Yoga Stella); Harald and Marlies Reiske, Germany. Devotional chanting with Swami Nirvanananda. Italian editions of some of Mr. Davis' books will be available by Marco Valerio Editore (marcovalerio.it).

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Radiance

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With CSA members and friends at a meditation seminar in south Germany. *2007*

Front Cover Photo:
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When one is so identified with an object of concentration that the sense of individual self is absent, a state of samadhi is realized. When attention withdrawn from external conditions is focused at the sensorium, one can be absorbed in Om, then enter an internal realm.

– Swami Sri Yukteswarji (1855 – 1936)

Exploring Higher Realities

The *sensorium* is the part of the brain that processes information from the senses. When our attention is internalized, it is removed from the senses, allowing pure awareness to be experienced. That kind of samadhi is superior to a sense of oneness with an objective focus of attention such as light, sound, or a pleasant sensation.

Samadhi with the support of an object of perception may be easier for some people to experience because it provides the satisfaction of being identified with something. The possibility of experiencing a transcendent samadhi may not be attractive because it is not understood by a mind that has been relating to ideas, objective conditions, and sensations.

Some meditators who are interested in exploring states of samadhi may not easily succeed because of inability to be alert or effectively concentrate. Their internalized attention becomes involved with emotions, memories, or constant movements and changes (*vrittis*) in the mind and awareness. Or they drift into a semiconscious condition between wakefulness and sleep and experience fantasies. For meditation to result in samadhi with or without an object of perception it is necessary to be alert and intentional.

The most liberating kind of samadhi is complete unification of attention and awareness with our pure essence that provides realization (experience and knowledge) that we are units of the pure essence of ultimate Reality—the enduring is-ness, the formless, nameless existence.

Even prior to having the samadhi of Self-realization we can use our intellect and intuition to know our pure essence and ultimate Reality.

Enlightened teachers through the centuries have said that internalized meditation and intellectual and intuitive insights (either or both) can result in spiritual enlightenment that will liberate a person's mind and awareness.

Intellectual and intuitive insights can provide knowledge that inspires (awakens soul powers) us to be highly motivated to be fully committed on an effective spiritual path (a course of actions; not a road to an objective destination). Until awakening is complete and permanent, if aspiration to be fully enlightened is not fervently sustained, being distracted from a spiritual path or returning to former states of consciousness may be possible.

Our metaphysical ("beyond" ordinary physical conditions) studies, lifestyle regimens, intellectual and intuitive investigations, and meditation practices should produce ideal results or be improved or changed until they do. If we want to be Self-realized in our current incarnation, no useful purposes are served by continuing to do things that cause us to have limited circumstances or allow ignorance of the facts of life to prevail.

Being "good" (living constructively) does not attract God's attention or blessings; it nurtures psychological well-being as a firm foundation for spiritual growth (awakening). Living in ways that weaken and waste physical and mental forces and cause emotional unrest prevents spontaneous spiritual growth. That is why wisely regulated control of thinking, feeling, and behaviors is recommended for Kriya Yogis (*Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 2:1*).

The purpose of right spiritual practice is to remove psychological conditions that blur awareness and keep it identified with the inertia of *tamas guna*, unstable mental and emotional conditions, and sensory stimulation.

Even excessive attraction to what is considered to be good, beautiful, or elevating may result in addictions and bondage to externals. Enlightened people say that *tamasic* influences can be overcome by constructive (*sattwic*) actions that are skillfully performed without egocentric inclinations. Meditation is to be practiced as a spiritual duty while knowing that when we do what is right, ideal results will follow. All actions can then be

performed without anxiety regarding their results. When we enthusiastically do what we know is best for us to do, complete fulfillment of our spiritual destiny is assured. To be *enthused* is to be inspired and motivated rather than superficially emotionally aroused, excited, or stimulated. When we know our true nature, ultimate Reality, and what the real purpose of living is, we cannot be otherwise than enthused about right living and effective spiritual practice that unveil and bring forth our innate qualities and higher knowledge.

When spiritual awakening is fast, we can be pleased and thankful. When it is slower than we want it to be, we should be steadfast in our resolve and continue to do what we know to be best for us. Doubt, moodiness, emotional instability, worry, and neglecting duties, constructive lifestyle regimens, and meditation should be avoided.

We should rise above ordinary human consciousness mental attitudes, emotions, and behaviors and choose to think, feel, and behave as though we were already spiritually enlightened. The ideal is to actually adopt ideal mental attitudes, emotions, and behaviors rather than hope or pretend to have them.

Paramahansa Yogananda often said, "Thinking that you are not free keeps you in bondage. Think that you are free and you will be free." Knowing that we are spiritual beings should enable us to adjust our mental attitude, thoughts, moods, and behaviors in accord with that knowledge.

A female lion attacked a herd of sheep with such force that she gave birth to a cub without being aware of it. The cub, raised by sheep and learning to behave and bleat as they did, believed that it was like them. After a year, when the sheep-identified lion was approached by a curious lion who happened to see it, it became frightened. It was taken to the edge of a river by the visiting lion, told to look at its reflection in the water, and encouraged to roar like its new friend who demonstrated how to do it. Seeing that it looked like a lion and could roar like a lion empowered it to be quickly restored to its true identity.

Awakening to full awareness of our true nature is not always easy to do. Although sudden enlightenment is possible, it is

more common for it to progressively occur. Even when states of samadhi can be experienced, our attention may again identify with the contents of the mind.

> When wavelike movements in the mind and awareness stop, the Self abides in its true nature. When not thus abiding, one's attention and awareness are inclined to [again] be involved with modifying influences.
> – *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 1:2,3,4*

Some people who experience samadhi supported by an object of perception or a transcendent samadhi that doesn't completely purify the mind resume ordinary mental attitudes and habits of behavior after meditation. They have memories of meditative perceptions which make impressions (*samskaras*) in the mind. Frequent transcendent samadhi will purify all levels of the mind. Samadhi with an object of perception can help us be mentally and emotionally calm but may not rid the mind of false ideas or prevent unwise behavior.

I have known skillful meditators who were also egocentric, small-minded, and/or neurotic. They could experience ecstatic and superconscious states mixed with thoughts and emotions that were enjoyable but not psychologically transformative. In some enlightenment traditions such people may be humorously said to be "only half-baked" because they are not yet free from limiting conditions such as uncontrolled thoughts; flawed perceptions; fantasies; memories and subconscious influences that disturb the mind or emotions; and partial or extreme changes in states of consciousness and moods.

Because awareness-modifying conditions may be influential when we are meditating, it is important that we be alert and discerning and know the difference between what is useful and what is not useful to allow to occur. Meditative perceptions are spiritually beneficial when they help us to be more aware and discerning after meditation.

Some meditative perceptions may be produced by the mind due to a tendency to indulge in fantasy, tiredness, insufficient

sleep, stress, lack of oxygen in the blood, or stimulation or quieting of certain regions of the brain. Example: quieting of "orientation centers" that are ordinarily used when relating to time and space can result in a sense of timeless existence without boundaries. Stimulation of some regions of the brain with a magnetic field may produce a feeling or awareness of an invisible "presence" or of being out of the body. Electrical stimulation of some brain centers may elicit vivid memories of past events as though "reliving" them.

Breathing more slowly and less deeply when meditating, focusing attention in the front and higher regions of the brain, using a mantra, or listening to subtle sound frequencies while contemplating Om and its Source may produce a variety of perceptions that attract our attention inward. They shouldn't be allowed to distract us from our intention to experience pure superconsciousness and transcendent samadhi. Pure superconsciousness is not modified by thoughts or emotions.

To have attention and awareness absorbed in pleasant or interesting perceptions and experiences during meditation and be fully identified with ordinary states of consciousness and circumstances after meditation does not help us be completely spiritually enlightened—to have full knowledge of being a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality.

Regardless of what we are doing, we can learn to be constantly aware of our true nature and relationship with the Infinite. Some Christians describe doing this as "practicing [being conscious of] the presence of God." Some Indian gurus tell their disciples to acknowledge and affirm *aham Brahmasmi* (I am ultimate Reality) while knowing that one Reality emanates all souls, things, and processes in all realms.

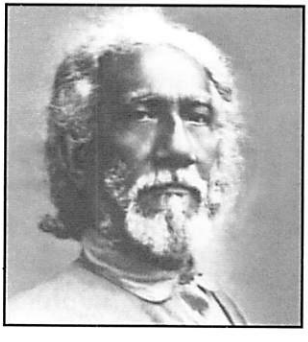
We cannot relate to external events when our attention and awareness are completely blended with an object of meditative contemplation or during transcendent samadhi. A more practical and liberating realization is to always be conscious of our true nature and ultimate Reality while we relate to events and circumstances. Although there is then no need to "go into" or "come out of" samadhi, we may withdraw from mundane and subjec-

tive conditions when we want to rest for a while in thought-free conscious-existence-being.

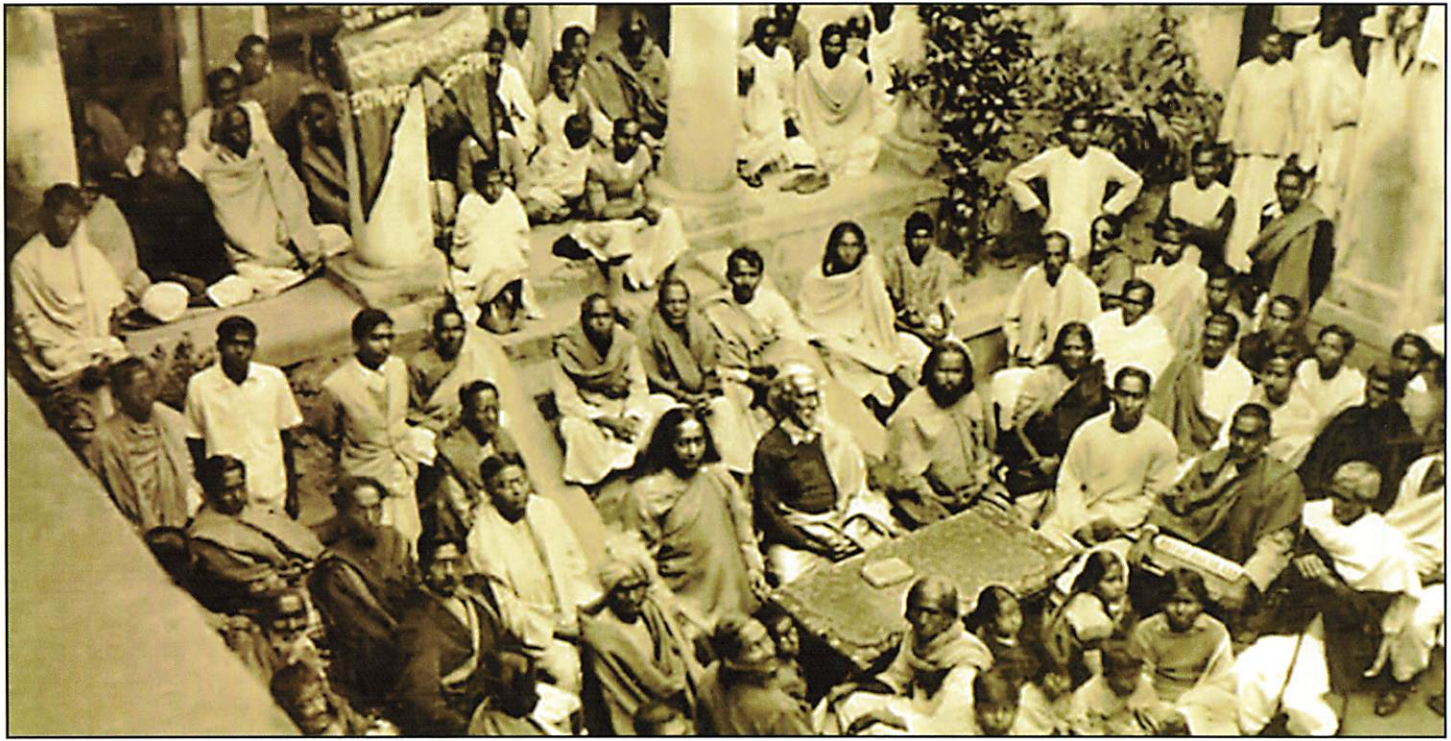
To be permanently conscious of our oneness with ultimate Reality is the furthest extent of spiritual awakening to be fully realized in our current incarnation. This ideal culmination of spiritual practice was affirmed by Sri Yukteswarji in the last sentence of his small book *The Holy Science*. The original title when published in India before it was translated into English is *Kaivalya Darsanam*.

Sanskrit *kaivalya* (kevala) means oneness, alone, absolute, pure, transcendent. *Darsanam* (darshan) is direct seeing, perception, realization, or comprehension.

Sri Yukteswarji wrote a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita and discussed some of the themes with Lahiri Mahasaya as the work progressed. He also wrote articles about ascending and descending cosmic cycles and how they affected the intellectual and intuitive abilities of people on our planet. He said that our current 2,400-year era, during which electric and magnetic forces are being creatively used, began in 1700. Some discoveries of fine material forces that were made before that date provided indications of what was soon to be more widely known. The next ascending cycle will be a 3,600-year era during which many people will have highly developed intellectual abilities. That one will be followed by 4,800 years during which perhaps 75% percent of the global human population will be spiritually conscious—an authentic Age of Enlightenment.



Swami Sri Yukteswarji
May 10, 1855 – March 9, 1936



Center: Paramahansa Yogananda sitting beside Swami Sri Yukteswar during a public meeting at his guru's ashram in Serampore (near Kolkata), India. *1935*

Send questions, inquiries, or themes—which may be used in a future issue of this publication—by regular mail or to rd@csa-davis.org

I am sometimes frustrated because of my slow spiritual growth and tend to indulge in sad moods, doubt that spiritual enlightenment is possible for me, and neglect my meditation sessions. What can I do to stay inspired and highly motivated?

Decide to live as constructively as possible and to steadily continue your studies and meditations. If you are not quickly spiritually enlightened, right living and spiritual practices will enhance your life. Aspire to be fully awake and know that you will be, but don't be impatient. Cultivate Self-contentment in all circumstances. Acknowledge that you are a spiritual being and endeavor to think and act with that understanding. You, and all souls, are destined to awaken to complete awareness and knowledge of your real nature. Go deeply into your essence and you will intuitively know the truth about your relationship with the Infinite and what your ultimate realization will be.

Now in my early thirties and seriously thinking about making some positive changes for my life, I am not sure of what to do. How can I have clear insights and guidance that will enable me to make right choices and do the right things?

Examine your knowledge and abilities and think of ways to constructively use what you know and can do. If you need more knowledge and skills, acquire what you think you need.

Ask: "What can I do to satisfy my urge (or calling) to do things that are worthwhile and of value to me, others, and the environment?" Write the ideas and examine them. Cross out the ideas that don't appeal to you and write more when you are inspired to do so.

Creatively imagine possibilities. When you know, or think you know, what to do, imagine doing it and how you will feel while doing it. Expect the universe to provide opportunities that can be examined and evaluated. Avoid thinking or acting as

though you have to try to forcibly accomplish purposes of value. Have harmonious relationships with the processes of nature, others, and emerging events.

I have had several disappointments through the years and was recently rejected by someone I highly respected. I don't want to have to live for the next several years with severe mental and emotional pain. How can I heal the pain I have and avoid being hurt again in the near and distant future?

Be realistic. Events that might cause us to be disappointed and not satisfied are common. How we respond determines our mental and emotional condition. We can choose to be hurt and feel pain or we can choose to look beyond outer circumstances and cheerfully go forward with clearly defined purposes. No one can cause us to have emotional pain as a reaction to events that occur. If we do feel hurt, we can heal it by assuming an insightful point of view and being objective instead of reactive.

We should have more useful things to do than to allow feelings and thoughts of rejection or disappointment to poison our mind, disturb our emotions, and interfere with creative living.

Would remembering experiences we had in past incarnations enable us to better know our current karmic condition?

Attempts to remember past incarnations we had, or think we might have had, usually result in the emergence of false memories and fantasy. How we think and behave now is much more important than what we might have done in the recent or distant past. By being aware of the thoughts, subconscious inclinations, and habits that we have now, we can replace what is not useful with mental states, states of consciousness, and intentional behaviors that are beneficial. To nurture spiritual growth, think and live constructively; acquire accurate information about higher realities; discern the difference between your pure essence and mental and emotional states; and be more aware of your true nature.

How important is it for a person on a spiritual path to be highly educated?

We should be well-informed about matters which are essential to our well-being and that enable us to live effectively and accomplish our purposes. Not knowing what should be known or being small-minded or egocentric interferes with spiritual awakening. Many well-meaning people are not successful in their spiritual-growth endeavors because they don't know how to elicit their innate qualities, don't understand philosophical concepts, or are inclined to be easily distracted. Although they may say they want to be spiritually enlightened, they may not want to change habitual mental states, states of consciousness, and behaviors.

How many kriya pranayamas should be done during a meditation session?

Do as many as you feel comfortable doing. Not so few that you don't have satisfying results and not so many that you are being too forceful. New initiates are advised to do twelve repetitions once or twice a day. After a few weeks when it is easy to do them, do a few more. Look for ideal results of kriya pranayama practice—mental calmness, internalization of attention, clarity of awareness. After attentive pranayama practice, rest in the deep silence for an extended period of time. When doing that, if you want to contemplate something, aspire to experience your true nature. Or listen to or imagine that you hear the OM vibration. Merge in it for a while, then contemplate its source, the expressive aspect of ultimate Reality, then the pure essence of ultimate Reality of which you are a unit.

Meditation methods and techniques can result in mental and emotional calmness that enables us to concentrate easily. Moving currents of life force (*prana*) through the chakras with kriya pranayama enlivens them and encourages life forces and attention to flow up to the front and higher regions of the brain while we are meditating. The capacities of the brain to process clear states of consciousness are also improved.

A friend says that he receives telepathic instruction from Babaji and other gurus in our Kriya tradition. Should I tell him I don't believe it, or avoid getting involved?

Your friend may have useful insights and ideas that emerge in his mind which he attributes to other sources. If your opinion isn't requested, don't offer it. If your opinion is invited, say that such experiences that may seem real may be mind-produced to provide emotional or mental satisfaction rather than be actual (real) communications.

Paramahansa Yogananda told me and a few other brother disciples that neither he, nor our other gurus, would communicate like that. He told us that we could learn to have mental and spiritual attunement with him and our guru-lineage that could assist us to be more Self- and God-aware.

A disciple told Master about a person who said she was telepathically guided by a saint who "came to her" when she meditated. Master advised, "If you tell her that her mind is producing her experiences she won't believe you, and may leave us and not have our spiritual friendship and support. Allow her to outgrow the desire for that kind of experience."

If disciples with whom Master had a close relationship were having fantasies or other tendencies that confined their awareness, his advice could be more direct and insistent because a guru's "job" is to encourage and assist disciples to "see through" and rise above limiting conditions.

When I was with Master he always told me what I needed to hear and silently uplifted me with his personal presence and constant Self- and God-awareness. When I was with him, and learned to be attuned to his consciousness, I was clearly aware of omnipresence and omnipotence—one Reality and Power.

Authentic enlightenment traditions don't have angels, gods, goddesses, or avatars who will do for us what we need to do for ourselves, nor do they have philosophical concepts that must be believed. Although enlightened teachers may assist us and what they teach may inform and guide us, to be enlightened we need to think and live in ways that allow our awakening to spontaneously occur to the stage of liberation of consciousness.

When we don't understand higher realities we should be motivated to acquire and wisely use information we need to have until our innate knowledge emerges. We have to sincerely want to know what is true rather than be satisfied with false ideas or partial understanding.

> Inability to perceive what is true is the primary cause of other restrictive influences which may be dormant, weak, controlled, or freely expressive.
> – *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 2:4*

Not knowing our pure essence and relationship with ultimate Reality keeps us confined by a mistaken sense of self-identity, debilitating habits, mental states, and subconscious conditions which may be dormant, weak, controlled, or expressive. Kriya Yoga practice restores our awareness to its original wholeness, replaces harmful habits with constructive behaviors, illumines the mind, and removes troublesome subconscious conditions.

The quickest way to rise above restrictive conditions is to intentionally think and live as a free spiritual being. If we are reluctant to try to do it, we are choosing to remain egocentric and have conditions and experiences that correspond with that point of view. By resisting inclinations to allow bad habits, restlessness, or emotional conflicts to influence how we think and behave, we can be wisely Self-directed instead of impelled by troublesome causative (karmic) influences.

Such influences may include mental attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, expectations, habitual behaviors, compulsive reactions to events that occur or what others say and do, and memories. Some influences may be restrictive and cause discomfort or pain; some may be supportive and arouse positive feelings and thoughts. Troublesome influences can be resisted, weakened, and neutralized by allowing supportive influences to express, making wise choices, and performing constructive actions.

Frequent superconscious meditation that reveals our true nature makes us impervious to influences that were formerly troublesome.

My spiritual awakening is very slow. I am somewhat discouraged because of the seeming slowness of the global population to be sincerely interested in spirituality and in nurturing others and the planet. How can I be more optimistic and enthused?

To be *optimistic* is to expect superior outcomes of emerging events. To be *enthused* is to be enlivened by the spirit or vitality of God (ultimate Reality).

Have a long-term vision of possibilities for yourself, others, and the environment. Spiritual awakening can spontaneously occur and it can be nurtured with intentional right actions that calm the mind and clarify awareness.

You can quicken your spiritual awakening by wanting to be enlightened and improving the capacity of your mind and consciousness to accommodate it. You can, with faith, wish and hope for the spiritual awakening of others but you cannot force it to happen. The place to work from is from within yourself.

In 1950, Paramahansa Yogananda said to me: "You have to live. Why not live in the highest way?" His words were easy to understand. I had to decisively respond to them. That is what I have been dedicated to doing for sixty-seven years.

Kriya Yoga (effective practices for right living and awakening to Self-realization) principles, were known and used for several thousand years by a few devotees. They have only been more widely taught for a little more than one hundred years.

Kriya Yoga practitioners have to be sufficiently intelligent, inspired, and motivated in order to have the benefits that are possible to have. Results are according to right, concentrated endeavors. Individuals who are emotionally devotional may be inclined to be satisfied with feeling that they are communing with God during and after meditation. Those who are inspired to experience and know their true nature and ultimate Reality can be Self- and God-realized. Beyond stages of realization that are mixed with thoughts and feelings, is transcendent oneness, the "great aloneness"—the ultimate (final) freedom. A subtle sense of self that may prevail when transcendence is not complete or permanent is joyous-conscious-being.

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The Science of Self-Realization

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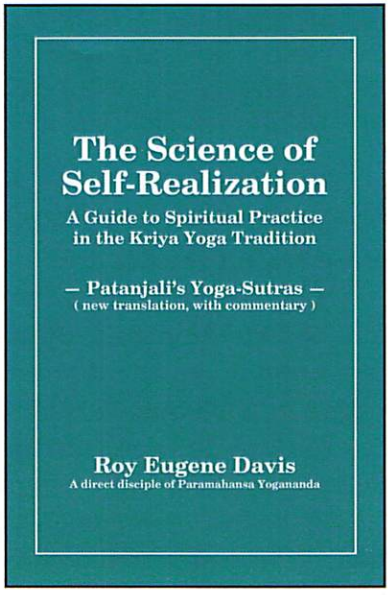
The Science of Self-Realization
A Guide to Spiritual Practice in the Kriya Yoga Tradition
— Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras —
(new translation, with commentary)
Roy Eugene Davis
A direct disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda

Part One: Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras

Kriya Yoga (disciplined thinking and actions, profound Self-inquiry, and transcending a mistaken sense of self) is taught as a way to weaken and remove conditions that interfere with spiritual awakening and Self-realization. Meditation practices, exceptional powers of perception and extraordinary abilities to be used to nurture spiritual awakening, superconscious states, and stages of awakening to spiritual enlightenment and liberation of consciousness are explained.

sutras— "threads," Sanskrit verb root *siv*, "to sew." Aphorisms, concise statements that may require a commentary of explanation. Patanjali's text was composed two thousand years ago.

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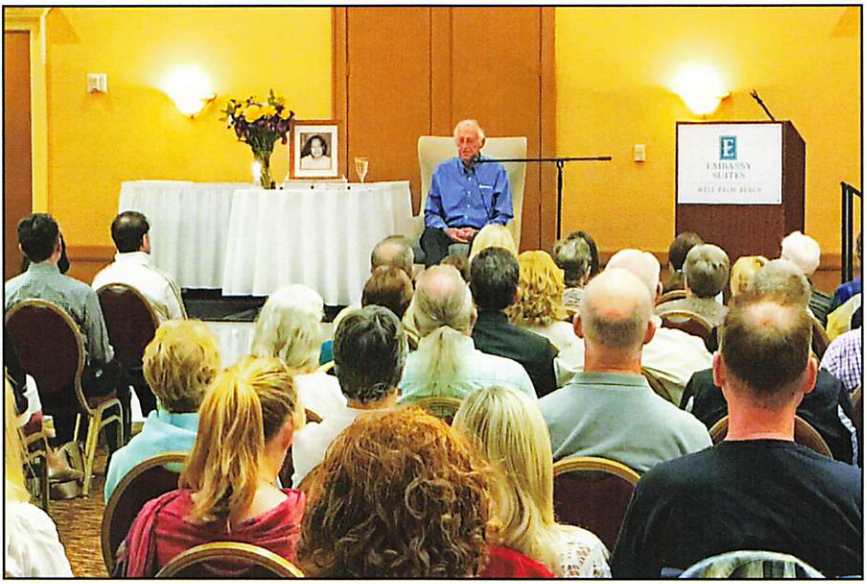

At our meditation seminar in West Palm Beach, Florida.
January 22 2017

Read a little. Meditate more. Think of God all the time.
– Paramahansa Yogananda (1893–1952)

Front cover: At the European Kriya Yoga Congress in Arenzano, Italy. *April 9, 2017*

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The wholeness of ultimate Reality extends
to and pervades the physical universe.
— *Mahavatar Babaji, guru of Lahiri Mahasaya*

We Are Spiritual Beings in a Spiritual World

Whether incarnated in a physical universe or in subtle realms, we are spiritual beings in a spiritual world. This can be known by being aware of our true nature as a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality and its expressive aspect that produces all things from itself, pervades and maintains them, and animates all forms of life. Clearly comprehending these facts (not merely believing them) changes our perceptions of what we experience and observe and removes us from troublesome conditions that are commonly encountered by most people.

Why is this information not more widely known? Why are many people confused? Why do so many people have difficulties in their everyday lives? Why are only a few people sincerely interested in spirituality? Why do so few experience satisfying spiritual growth?

This information is not more widely known because it is not easy for the average person to accept it as true or comprehend when it is believed to be true.

Many people are confused because they don't know what to believe, may not be interested in being discerning, or may have mental or emotional issues that need to be resolved.

People who frequently have difficulties may not know how to avoid trouble or to creatively respond to events and circumstances that need to be confronted. They may not know how to constructively think and act to accomplish purposes that are of value to them. Some people think that they are victims of circumstances beyond their ability to control.

Most people in our current era are not sincerely interested in spirituality, their intellectual powers are weak or misused, are inclined to be preoccupied with relationships and activities related to physical well-being and the satisfaction of desires, or may not yet know of their potential to be fully conscious.

Few people who are interested in spirituality experience satisfying spiritual growth because they may not know how (or aren't able) to transcend strong identification with a mistaken sense of self or modified states of mind and awareness, may be emotionally immature, or may have psychological problems to overcome. If interest in spiritual awakening is sincere (honest), in-depth study of higher realities and intensive (concentrated) Self-inquiry, along with right living and effective spiritual practices will reveal innate qualities and knowledge. Steady resolve to be spiritually enlightened and not be satisfied with only partial awakening are helpful characteristics to have.

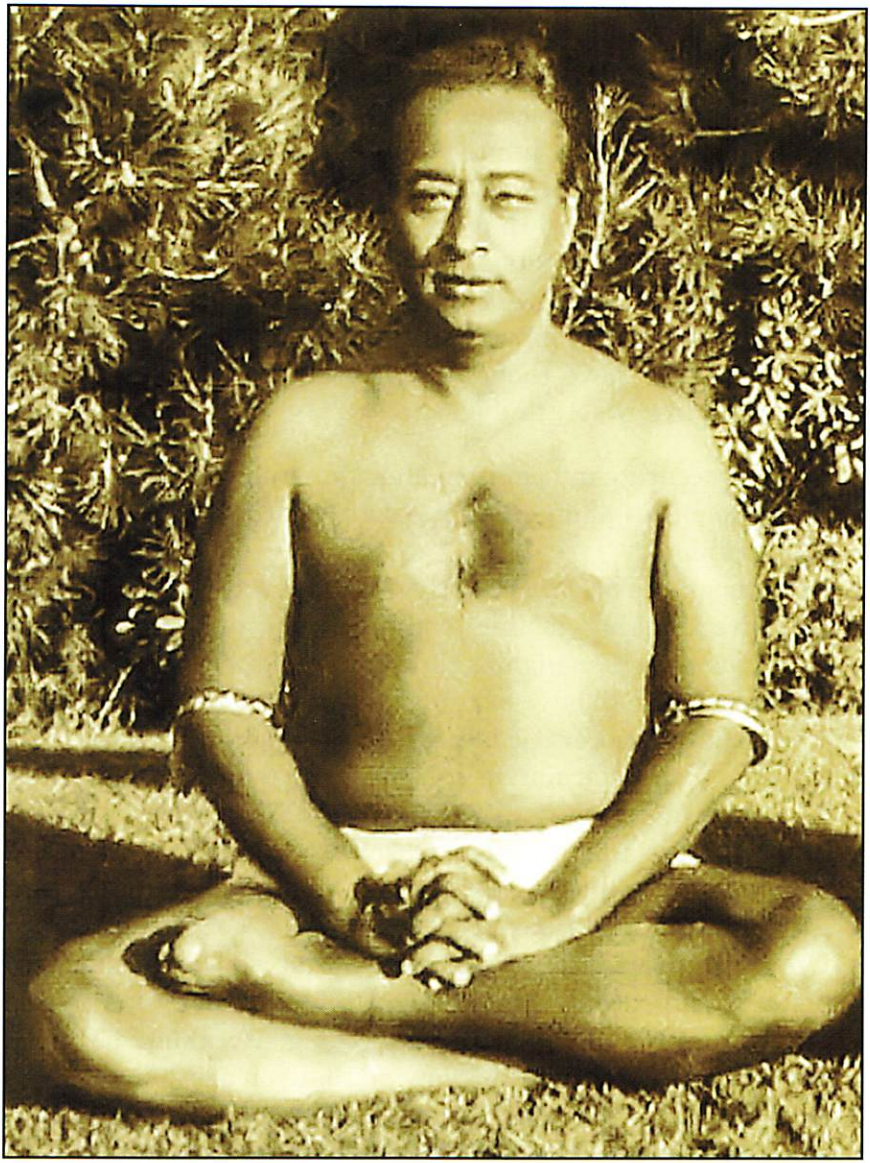
Examine Categories and Processes of Cosmic Manifestation

Some people say that the philosophical system that numbers and describes the categories and processes of cosmic manifestation is dualistic, that it indicates a separation between the expressive aspect of ultimate Reality and physical realms.

Because OM, ultimate Reality's expressive aspect's power, pervades universes, there are no separate powers, just as the pure essence of ultimate Reality and its individualized units (souls) are not separate.

A category is a class or division of things that have shared characteristics. Categories of cosmic manifestation are defined from subtle to gross levels as objectified by the three energetic influences (*gunas*) acting on the principles (*tattwas*) or fundamental aspects of reality. Sequential manifestations from the OM vibration (with space, time, and fine forces) are cosmic individuality; cosmic mind; causal (electric and magnetic fields) realm; astral (energy and life force) realms; and physical universes. Units of the pure essence of ultimate Reality are said to be in realms where conditions are compatible with their states of consciousness, intelligence, and functional capacities.

Note: Read about categories and processes of cosmic manifestation in my book *Absolute Knowledge That Liberates Consciousness*. Or listen to the audio CD version.



Paramahansa Yogananda in the middle 1940s.

Want to Realize (Experience and Know) That You Are a Spiritual Being in a Spiritual World

The seeming gap (space or distance) between states of mind and awareness that are limited and that which is infinite (without limits or boundaries) is an illusion, a flawed perception. When we think and feel that we are small, confined beings our behaviors reflect those thoughts and feelings.

For innate knowledge of what we are and our relationship with the wholeness of life to be revealed, and to express freely, we have to rise above thoughts and feelings of being confined and learn to live wisely and effectively.

- Acquire accurate information about your spiritual nature and higher realities and believe it. Discard false ideas and superficial opinions.
- Remember that *complete* Kriya Yoga practice includes constructive thinking, feeling, and behaviors; profound study of your true nature using discrimination to discern what is real and meditation to have personal experience; and dissolving or transcending egocentric ideas, feelings, and inclinations.
- If sudden, transformative spiritual awakening doesn't occur (it seldom does), patiently (calmly, without anxiety) persist in being alert and attentive. Observe the positive changes in mental states, moods, awareness, and understanding that occur from time to time.
- Until you can constantly be aware that you are a spiritual being in a spiritual world, remind yourself to be thus aware. Don't try to force spiritual awakening; it cannot be done. Peacefully cultivate faith, knowing that you are doing what is most helpful in bringing forth your divine qualities and having your awareness restored to its original wholeness.

Ask, "How clear was my awareness and what did I know about higher realities before I forgot my true nature and relationship with ultimate Reality?"

At the innermost level of your being, *you know*!

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions and Practices

Send questions, inquiries, or themes—which may be used in a future issue—to me at Post Office Box 7, Lakemont, Georgia 30552-0001 or to rd@csa-davis.org

How much can a guru help a disciple overcome limitations and be spiritually conscious? What does a disciple need to do to be free of limitations and Self-realized?

The word *guru* is generally defined as a "teacher" who may have three ways of helping sincere disciples:

1. Provide helpful information.
2. Transmit energy (*shakti*) and use intention to arouse a disciple's spiritual energies.
3. Guide a disciple to awaken from egocentric awareness to superconsciousness and Self-realization that liberates the mind and consciousness from delusions, illusions, and troublesome subconscious influences.

Paramahansa Yogananda had all of those abilities. A guru can help disciples when they are receptive to what the guru is, says, and does. Disciples should:

- Improve intellectual abilities to know the difference between facts and opinions and between their pure essence of being as an observer and flawed ideas or feelings of self.
- Think rationally.
- Cultivate emotional maturity.
- Be alert and attentive.
- Renounce harmful habits and behaviors while cultivating good habits and proper or ideal behaviors.
- Use spiritual practices to resolve or avoid psychological conditions that interfere with spiritual awakening, be mentally and emotionally calm, and clarify their awareness.
- Nurture mental and spiritual attunement with the guru, the lineage of gurus, and ultimate Reality.

A enlightened guru knows that his (or her) role is to help disciples be spiritually enlightened. During a conversation with a few disciples, in 1951, I heard Paramahansa Yogananda say, "I am not the guru. God is the guru. I am God's servant."

He was then withdrawing from public appearances and had decided to be in seclusion at his retreat house in Twentynine Palms, California. There, he devoted most of his time to dictating commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita and other books. During that period of his life he said to a few of us, "From now on I will appear to be with you and talk with you as I do now. Inwardly, I am detached."

To a disciple who had asked about a philosophical concept, he said, "I would rather not talk about that now. These days I am more absolute." He meant that he was inclined to be more conscious of transcendent realities.

For most people, an embodied, enlightened guru is easier to relate to, and learn from, than their inner guru: the Self- and God knowledge of their essence of being that teaches, guides, and awakens as it is gradually (or sometimes quickly) revealed.

When a person is initiated by a guru or a representative of a guru, a psychic (soul) connection is established with the guru and a lineage of gurus. When I initiate someone, if that person makes a sincere commitment to nurture their spiritual growth until they are Self-realized, they can learn to be conscious of their attunement with the lineage of gurus and be aware of a spiritual force that flows through the gurus to them.

An embodied guru is a point-of-contact with the Source. Accept practical, available help that enables you to live effectively and awaken spiritually. Look beyond outer conditions and relationships to your Source and to what you are as an immortal spiritual being.

A spiritual path (actions and processes used to accomplish useful purposes and be fully conscious) shouldn't be complicated. Once we know what to do and how to do it, we can focus our attention and actions on what is essential.

If fully enlightened people don't have limitations and can heal others and/or spiritually awaken them, why don't they do it for everyone who asks for that kind of help or needs it? Why haven't they or their teachings more obviously improved social, environmental, and economic conditions of large numbers of people, stopped wars, and created a heaven-like planet?

I never knew about anyone who was said to be enlightened who could heal or spiritually awaken everyone who asked to be healed or awakened. If enlightened people could do that, they would. Having improved social, environmental, and economic conditions, wars stopped, and ideal planetary conditions has been a slow process because the consciousness of most people is still fragmented and their awareness of spiritual realities is either blurred or obscured by their confused mental states and egocentric thinking, feeling, and behaviors.

For centuries prophets, "avatars," and spiritual teachers have declared that their presence on Earth and/or teachings would transform human consciousness and establish order and harmony. They lived for a few decades, then departed without having been as influential as they, and many of their followers, thought (or hoped) they would be.

Although many enlightened people have beneficially influenced others and improved living conditions, right endeavors of many people in all walks of life can also be helpful. I think it is of great value for each person who wants to see improved social and environmental circumstances to acquire knowledge of their true nature and higher realities, live wisely, and bring forth their innate, divine qualities and express them. Others will be benefited by what we do, and by the radiance of our spiritual awareness and optimism. Many will be inspired to emulate our mental attitudes and actions. The collective mental field and total consciousness of all people and forms of life will become more pure.

To expect a savior-figure or messiah to come into our world from celestial realms or in other ways to do for us what we can and should do for ourselves, is irresponsible.

I have meditated for three years. How many repetitions of kriya pranayamas should I be doing? Would it be benefit me to learn and use the higher meditation techniques?

Depth of concentrated pranayama practice is more useful than high numbers of repetitions. Twenty or thirty intensive repetitions should be sufficient. After the last one, keep your attention and awareness in the higher brain and aspire to experience pure awareness: joyous-conscious-existence. Until that is experienced, it might be helpful to listen to (or imagine that you hear) Om. Blend with Om then aspire to go beyond it to expanded awareness, then pure awareness.

If it is necessary (or if you are inclined) to continue the use if kriya pranayama, do it gently with or without mentally reciting *so-ham* or any other two word mantra. Gentle kriya pranayama is also called *sushumna* breathing: moving current up and down through the central prana channel in the spine. While doing it, be attentive to moments when there are gaps or spaces between streams of thoughts, or when your awareness is clear without mental restlessness or mood changes.

Paramahansa Yogananda seldom mentioned or taught the so-called higher techniques. He said that attentive use of the basic practices would be sufficient to enable one to awaken to Self-knowing. Some of the other meditation techniques are described as "higher" because they were taught after the basic methods had been used for a while.

Some people make the mistake of being too involved with knowing about other methods, then try to force meditation results or neglect to effectively practice the basic procedures.

I have known about people who used a variety of methods who were not spiritually enlightened and still had many false philosophical opinions and obvious psychological problems.

Complete Kriya Yoga practice must include constructive thinking and behaviors, in-depth intellectual and intuitive self-inquiry along with meditation, and awakening from egocentric states of consciousness.

I was initiated five years ago and now think I would like to teach others. How should I prepare to do it?

Study and practice until you understand the philosophical principles and are established in Self-awareness. Don't attempt to teach beyond your level of understanding. Don't try to encourage people to be quickly spiritually enlightened when what they may really need is to learn to live effectively, or advise them about how to solve their personal problems when you are not qualified to do it.

The practical way to help others is to provide information with books and perhaps classes or private instruction, teach simple meditation procedures, and encourage them to practice. It will be their responsibility to do what is necessary to have ideal results.

I don't see a spiritual eye light or have awareness of light in the higher brain when I meditate. Are such perceptions necessary? Should I try harder?

Trying hard will not produce results. Being more attentive may be helpful. It is not necessary to see light. Focus attention on clarifying your awareness, being conscious of your essence which is always pure and whole, and knowing ultimate Reality. Aspire to be fully enlightened while allowing your awakening to naturally occur.

Is it useful to have vedic rituals performed for our well-being?

In India, 3,500 years ago, people who thought of themselves as being *aryan* (noble) used rituals and prayers in attempts to influence cosmic forces and the processes of Nature. Their philosophical ideas were said to be vedic: knowledge that was revealed. Later, ideas of thinkers who sought to understand higher realities, the purpose of human existence, and how to be Self-realized, became known as *upanishads* (from the verb root *sad* = "to sit" and the prefixes *upa* = "near" and *ni* = "down"). Reverently sitting near the guru (teacher) is a practical way to learn about higher realities, natural processes, and the facts of

ordinary life. Speculation about origins and destinies of souls resulted in ideas about reincarnation, which became widely accepted among the general population. Plato and some other Greek philosophers later talked about reincarnation but the idea was not then widely accepted.

Thinking about ultimate Reality resulted in philosophical theories and experimental practices referred to as Yoga: yoking or bringing together a person's attention and awareness with their essence, a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality.

Sanskrit mantras and invocations are usually used at vedic rituals and their precise pronunciation is said to be important, as is the will-empowered intention for which the ritual is performed. Such purposes may include to nurture the health and well-being of a person or a community, have success in ventures, have harmonious environmental conditions, or to neutralize what may be thought of as troublesome astrological influences.

A simple vedic ritual commonly used by individuals is the *agni* (fire) offering. One prepares a small fire and puts in it a tablespoon of clarified butter, a few grains of rice, and perhaps other natural substances. With each offering, one audibly or mentally says, "Accept this offering, it is yours, not mine." What one is doing is sacrificing (renouncing) egocentric mental attitudes and behaviors while having faith that cosmic forces and the processes of nature will nurture and provide for one's well-being. Reported benefits derived from vedic rituals (or prayers by others) are usually placebo effects: what happens or is thought to happen because of one's belief and expectation.

In Kriya Yoga traditions it is said that the most beneficial, transformational, fire ritual is attentive practice of the basic guidelines and meditation methods that purify the mind and clarify one's awareness.

Wise Kriya Yoga initiates study to be informed about the facts of life, avoid situations that might distract them from their right endeavors, and diligently adhere to practices that unveil and reveal their innate Self-knowledge.

I have been on a spiritual path for twenty years and am not sure that I have made much progress. What can I do to be more conscious and functional?

Choose to be more conscious and freely functional. Decide what you need to do to be the kind of person you want be and optimistically go forward. Focus attention and actions only on essential matters that will produce and attract results that will enhance your life and unveil and bring forth your innate divine qualities and higher knowledge. Don't dwell on past mistakes; look into the near and distant future with confidence.

Besides attending to my spiritual studies and practices, duties, and wholesome lifestyle routines, what can I do as a kriya yogi to expand my consciousness and be helpful to others?

Expand your consciousness by contemplating the ultimate Reality that has no origin or end. Remember that you are a flawless unit of its pure essence.

Express through your body, ego (limited sense of selfhood), mind, and intellect while knowing your true nature to be unlimited and free. Meditate daily until you are superconscious then abide in that awareness for awhile.

Imagine the universe with billions of galaxies as being in your awareness. Imagine that you are spiritually enlightened. Doing this can help to make your mind, brain, and awareness receptive to expanded states of consciousness.

Respect the divine nature of all people and forms of life.

Nurture the environment.

Share information about higher realities with people who are receptive to learning.

Remember that your spiritual enlightenment beneficially influences the collective consciousness of all life on our planet and in the universe.

Regularly financially support our activities and projects.

Choose to wisely live in accord with knowing that you are an immortal spiritual being. That will help you grow to emotional and spiritual maturity and freely express your divine qualities.

During meditation I am not always aware of what occurs. I feel rested after the session but not more alert or insightful, similar to how I feel after sleeping.

Practice being alert and attentive at all times and it will be easier to be alert and attentive when you are meditating. If it is not easy to be fully conscious when meditating, meditate for shorter periods of time. Do things that will more fully involve your attention: audibly or mentally affirm, use a mantra when you are observing your breathing, do 8 or 10 repetitions of alternate nostril breathing, chant Om at each chakra from the base of the spine to the higher brain, then downward. Do a few repetitions of kriya pranayama. After each technique, rest in the deep silence. When you notice that you are not attentive, again use a technique to involve your attention. The purpose of spiritual practice is to learn to be fully conscious.

Do you know if anyone has recently had personal contact with the Babaji in our guru lineage? Some people on the internet claim to have been with him in the Himalayas and were taught by him.

I don't know of any authentic recent contacts. People who claim to have recently been personally instructed by Babaji are not truthful or they are mistaken. Most of them are attempting to impress people with their self-proclaimed spiritual status. Even if they are skillful teachers, their claims are false. There are many such people in India with large followings and some in Europe and America. Recently there have been a few people who say they are Paramahansa Yogananda reincarnated. It is all right to be aware of such foolishness; it is a waste of time and energy to be overly concerned about it.

The gurus in our lineage advised disciples to attend to their spiritual practices rather than try to seek out secluded yogis. If a person met a fully enlightened man or woman and asked for guidance, they would probably be told to return home, read *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and other basic books, and devote themselves to profound spiritual practice supported by right living.

Statues of Our Lineage of Gurus

Similar design as those in the Meditation Hall at CSA headquarters

8 inches high $63 resin $90 marble blend
Available in the CSA bookstore during retreats
To order direct from the supplier: price plus shipping.
Search for *guru statues* on their web page
24 inch high statues also available
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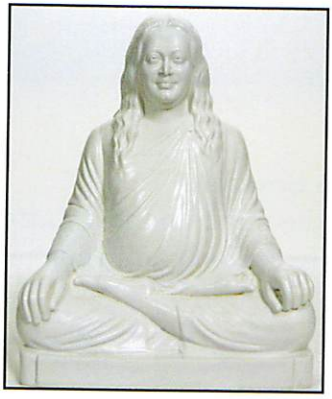
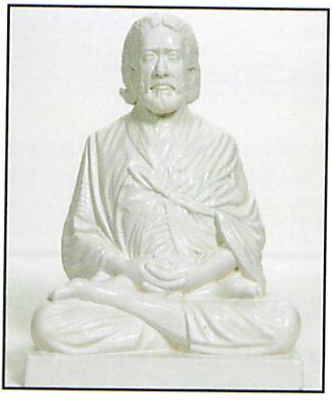
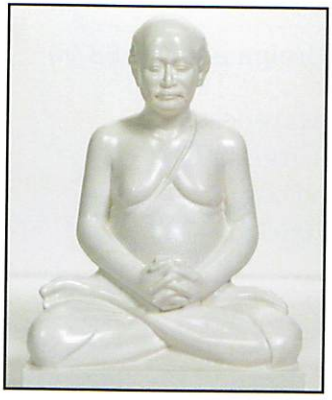


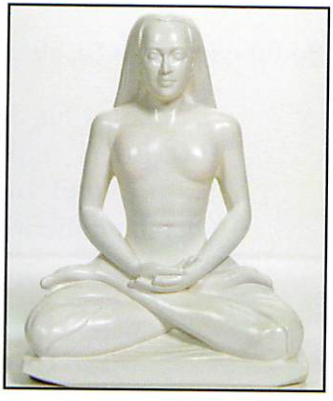
Paramahansa Yogananda



Sri Yukteswar

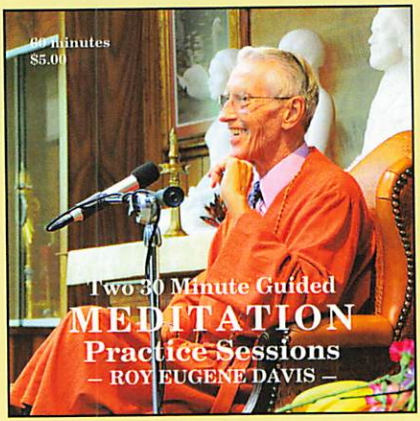


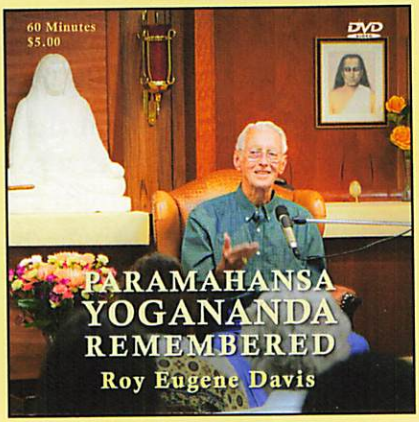
Lahiri Mahasaya



Mahavatar Babaji

Helpful Audio and Video Recordings





Audio recording: 60 minutes
Two 30-Minute Guided Meditation Sessions
Sessions begin with routines to calm the mind and focus attention. Use the short periods of silence to contemplate your pure essence and ultimate Reality.

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An Enlivening Power is Nurturing Our Universe
and We Can Learn to Cooperate With It

Radiance

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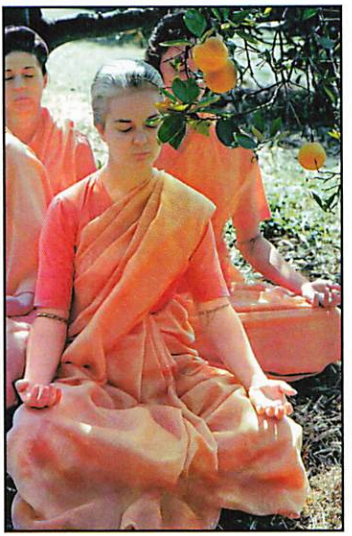


During her early years.

In Memoriam

Merna Brown (Mrinalini Mata)
May 8, 1931 – August 3, 2017

President of Self-Realization Fellowship, Los Angeles, California, and Yogoda Sat Sanga* of India

She heard Paramahansa Yogananda lecture when she was fourteen and soon became a resident disciple. A few years after completing high school she began to edit her guru's writings and was later the main editor of the organization's publications. She visited India six times.

She was appointed president in 2011 after the passing of Faye Wright (Daya Mata) who served in that role since 1955.

Mrinalini, her monastic name, said to symbolize the purity of a lotus leaf, was chosen for her by Paramahansa Yogananda. *Mata* is a Sanskrit word for "mother."

Many people were inspired by Merna's good character and dedication to duties and spiritual practice. A memorial service was held on August 11th during the annual convocation.

The new president has not yet been announced as this issue of *Radiance Newsletter* is being prepared for the printer.

**Yogoda* (an innovated word used to indicate a relationship to yoga), *Sat* ("truth"), *Sanga* ("community, assembly"), is the name of the first organization formed in India by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1917.

Wake now, wake, O my saint; you did not meditate,
you did not concentrate, you wasted time in idle talk.
Death may be at your door, you may not have time
anymore to redeem your soul.

The Usefulness of Surrendered Commitment To Our Purposeful Spiritual Path

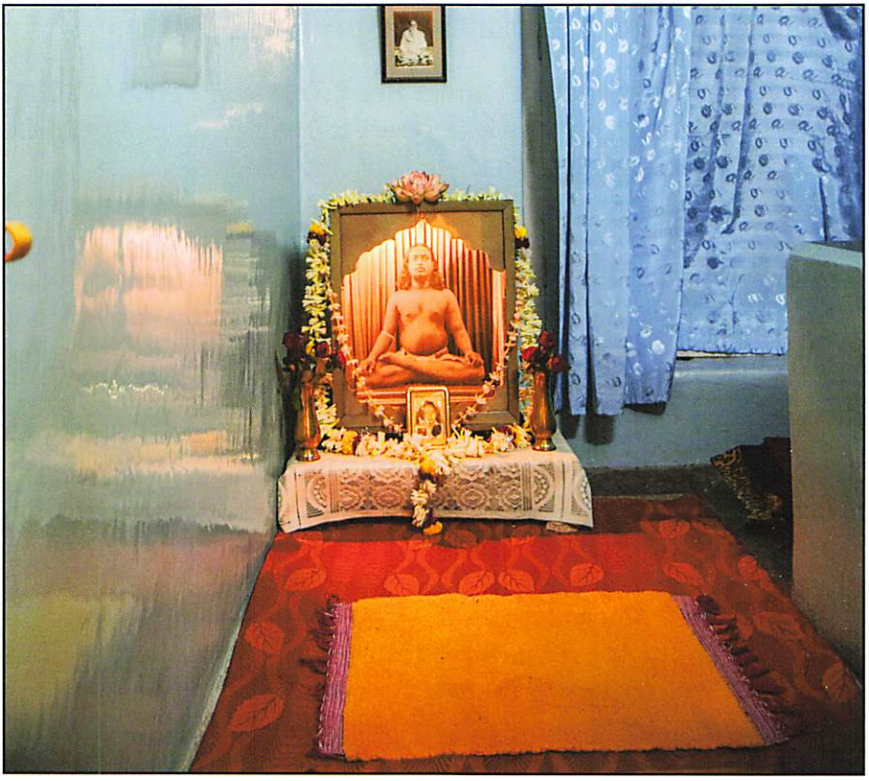
Paramahansa Yogananda's guru Sri Yukteswar (1855 – 1936) occasionally chanted the above lyrics to remind disciples of the necessity of commitment to their spiritual practices.

Without dedicated commitment it can be easy to disregard important matters or forget that biological life is precarious. Passing of time may not be noticed and there may be little or no feeling of urgency regarding the need to attend to personal duties or accomplish major goals. Sri Yukteswar told disciples that to nurture the saintly qualities of compassion, wisdom-guided will, intelligence, and intuitive knowledge of their true nature they only had to awaken to the truth of what they were. He sometimes went to their room in the early evening to see if they were meditating. If they were sleeping, he would say, "Get up!, get up!, are you going to sleep your life away!"

Master told the following story about his early years with his guru. On one occasion, after feeding many people who were at the ashram to attend a special event, when he went to his room late at night he was extremely tired. He thought, "It will be all right if I don't meditate now because today has been one of Karma Yoga (selfless service)." As he tried to settle down to sleep, his conscience said, "You should meditate a few minutes, at least. You know what your guru told you to do." He sat up, practiced a few kriya pranayamas and experienced a state of ecstasy for more than an hour. When he finished telling the story, he exclaimed, "See what I would have missed if I hadn't meditated that night!"

People who sincerely want to be spiritually enlightened are Self-determined and higher purpose-directed. They don't allow debilitating habits or moods to influence their behaviors.

My guru had been taught basic meditation practices by his father and his Sanskrit tutor who were devoted disciples of Lahiri Mahasaya. During his early teenage years he meditated in a small attic room in the family home in Calcutta (below). Years later he said, "There, I found [experienced] God!"



On a spiritual path, to *surrender* is to stop resisting what should be done and choose thoughts and actions that enable the highest good to be most quickly experienced. *Commitment* is complete dedication to right, productive actions. Committed disciples do more of what enables wisely *purposeful* (because of enduring value) aims to be *actualized* (caused or allowed to be real by their actions). When we are thus fully surrendered and committed, we are also more receptive to unplanned supportive processes and events referred to as indications of *grace* because they are freely provided rather than produced by what we do.

Indications of grace are evidence of the wholeness of life of which, from a small point of view, we may see ourselves to be participants and from a more cosmic awareness we may know we are a manifestation of the expressive aspect of ultimate Reality. Enlightened people who know of realities within and beyond the realm of Nature know that *everything is one Thing*. That is why enlightened (knowledgeable) people can say, "All that I see, hear, touch, smell, and taste is God."

Knowing that we are flawless units of the pure essence of one Reality can enable us to know why and how the wholeness of life supports and provides for us.

To *redeem* something is to improve, enhance, or restore it to its original state. Our awareness is redeemed when it is as it was before it was blurred and distorted by inertia, delusions (erroneous ideas), and illusions (flawed perceptions).

The first cause of blurred awareness was flawed perception of our pure essence because of identification with a small sense of self (ego) and perhaps the influence of the inertia of *tamas guna* in Nature. That intellectual error may continue to occur for as long as the difference between the soul or true Self as an observer and what is observed is not clearly discerned. When that difference is perceived, spiritual enlightenment prevails.

All effective *kriyas* (lifestyle regimens, behaviors, thoughts, and spiritual practices) should unveil our innate qualities and completely restore our awareness to permanent experience of joyous-conscious-being.

The ultimate aim of right living and spiritual practice is to fully awaken to Self-realization (experience and knowledge of our true nature). Partial awakening, while helpful and perhaps somewhat enjoyable, won't satisfy our innate yearning to have our awareness completely restored to wholeness.

At the innermost levels of being we are already completely whole, serene, and Self-aware. When the surface levels of our awareness that are distorted and fragmented are calmed and clarified, Self-realization is effortlessly experienced. Knowing this, we should have confidence in our ability to succeed on our spiritual path.

Three ordinary modified—because limited or distorted by mental impressions, delusions, or energetic influences (*gunas*) —states of awareness are 1) being awake; 2) dreaming; 3) and dreamless sleep. The fourth state that may be spontaneously experienced and can be cultivated is superconsciousness.

We can learn to think rationally when we are awake, have dreams that are calmly well-ordered, enjoy deep restful sleep, and experience superconsciousness at will. Early experiences of superconsciousness are usually somewhat mixed with thoughts and emotional influences. When the mind is calm and emotions are peaceful, pure superconscious awareness can prevail. Self-awareness and higher realities can then be directly (without the use of the senses, mind, intellect, or intuition) experienced.

During meditative superconsciousness various perceptions of light, sensation, and adjustments of states of awareness may occur. If the aim is to be spiritually enlightened, what is seen or experienced because of thoughts or moods being mixed with superconsciousness should be ignored and transcended.

Preliminary *samadhi* (blending of attention and awareness with an object of contemplation) can provide an experience of thought-free oneness-consciousness but it does not purify the mind. It isn't necessary to have that kind of samadhi before having transcendent realizations. My guru told me that some meditators stay involved with preliminary samadhi states for many years because they don't fervently aspire to be spiritually enlightened. He then emphatically told me not to be satisfied with those states of awareness and to go beyond them.

If we have occasions of expanded or cosmic consciousness, what is perceived or learned can be appreciated but should not be allowed to distract our attention from our ultimate aim.

I once read about a yogi who was rapidly progressing in his meditation practices under the guidance of a teacher. When he became proficient in cultivating superconsciousness, instead of aspiring to awaken to complete Self-realization, he felt "called" to be a conduit through which superconsciousness could flow into

planetary consciousness for the good of all people and the environment. His guru told him he was making a mistake and left him. Most of his remaining years were devoted to futile attempts to enlighten the world by writing his books and establishing an international community where people would live and work in harmony. His writings were too difficult for most readers to understand and the community didn't flourish.

The experience of transcendent "aloneness" is of pure being without the support of thoughts or personality characteristics. Buddhists refer to it as *nirvana:* "blowing out" or extinguishing ordinary states of consciousness, leaving only pure awareness. It is the same as *nirvikalpa samadhi* which isn't supported by conditions or mental modifications. It cannot be said to be a state, condition, or experience because there is no perception of independent self or of astral, causal, or celestial realms or their real or imagined inhabitants.

*Sa*bikalpa samadhi is *with* awareness of subjective (mental and emotional) influences, *nir*bikalpa samadhi is *without* that awareness. Superconscious awareness during meditation and at other times may be *sa*guna (*with* conditions produced by the influences of gunas) or *nir*guna (*without* that awareness).

Guna may be defined as a string, thread, strand, attribute, quality, or influence depending on its context (how it is used with other words in a sentence or theme).

Three gunas pervade the universe. *Sattwa* guna influences are illuminating and purifying. *Rajas guna* influences are actions that may or may not be constructive. *Tamas guna* is inertial and obscures Self-knowledge. When they don't influence us, our awareness is as clear (illumined) as our pure essence and we are spiritually enlightened.

For more information about gunas and their characteristics and influences see pages 13 to 17 in my book *An Easy Guide to Ayurveda* and chapters 17 and 18 in the *The Eternal Way*, my commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*. Also see guna-wikipedia on the Internet.

Peacefulness, gentleness, silence, self-restraint,
and mental purity are mental disciplines. Those
who practice them with highest faith and no
thought of reward are sattwic.
Mental states that are fraudulently cultivated
to gain the respect, honor, reverence of others
are rajasic: unsuitable and impermanent.
Mental states cultivated with misunderstanding
or for the purpose of doing harm, are tamasic.
– Bhagavad Gita 17:16 – 19
The Yoga of Discernment of the Three Kinds of Faith

Until one is fully enlightened, influences of the three gunas may be experienced. A person with tamasic characteristics may have occasions of insight and inclinations to be more alert and higher-purpose directed. A person with rajasic characteristics may revert to tamasic behaviors or aspire to be more conscious and wisely functional. A person with sattwic characteristics may be tempted to be more rajasic or tamasic.

Foods have sattwic, rajasic, and tamasic characteristics, as do physical, mental, and social environments in which we live. Spiritual aspirants are advised to choose pure, nutritious foods and, whenever possible, pure, supportive physical, mental, and social environments and personal relationships.

Complete clarity of awareness is the ultimate aim* of Kriya Yoga practice. Many truth seekers become overly involved with meditative perceptions (subjective light, mind-produced visions or dreamlike perceptions, ecstatic sensations) and a variety of states of consciousness. When those perceptions or experiences fade away, they may feel disappointed. Or they may be inclined to want to learn new meditation techniques instead of skillfully using the ones they already know.

*Kriya Yoga includes disciplined constructive living, profound Self-study, and surrender of a mistaken sense of self-identity. It is practiced to remove afflictions [conditions that may cause or are causing discomfort or troubles] and to cultivate samadhi.
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 2:2.

Many people superficially think about philosophical ideas without understanding them and constantly experiment with lifestyle routines, dietary regimens, and meditation practices without having satisfying results. Their psychological conflicts need to be resolved, impulsive behaviors need to be replaced with constructive behaviors, and they need to be dedicated to awakening to Self-realization as soon as possible.

How Do You Imagine (Mentally See) Yourself Now and In the Near and Distant Future?

Your self-image, states of consciousness, mental attitudes, moods, behaviors, and what you imagine doing, having, and experiencing in the near and distant future can produce and attract corresponding events and conditions and quicken your spiritual awakening. Until you are Self-realized and always naturally doing what is for your highest good, be Self-aware and control your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.

Think about your life. Do you sincerely want to be fully enlightened as soon as possible or do you usually think and act as though you were "only human" while hoping that you might be Self-realized in the future?

Are you doing what you need to do to be more aware, or are you allowing yourself to be influenced by ordinary inclinations, habits, and circumstances?

Do you nurture your mind with creative ideas and accurate information about higher realities every day?

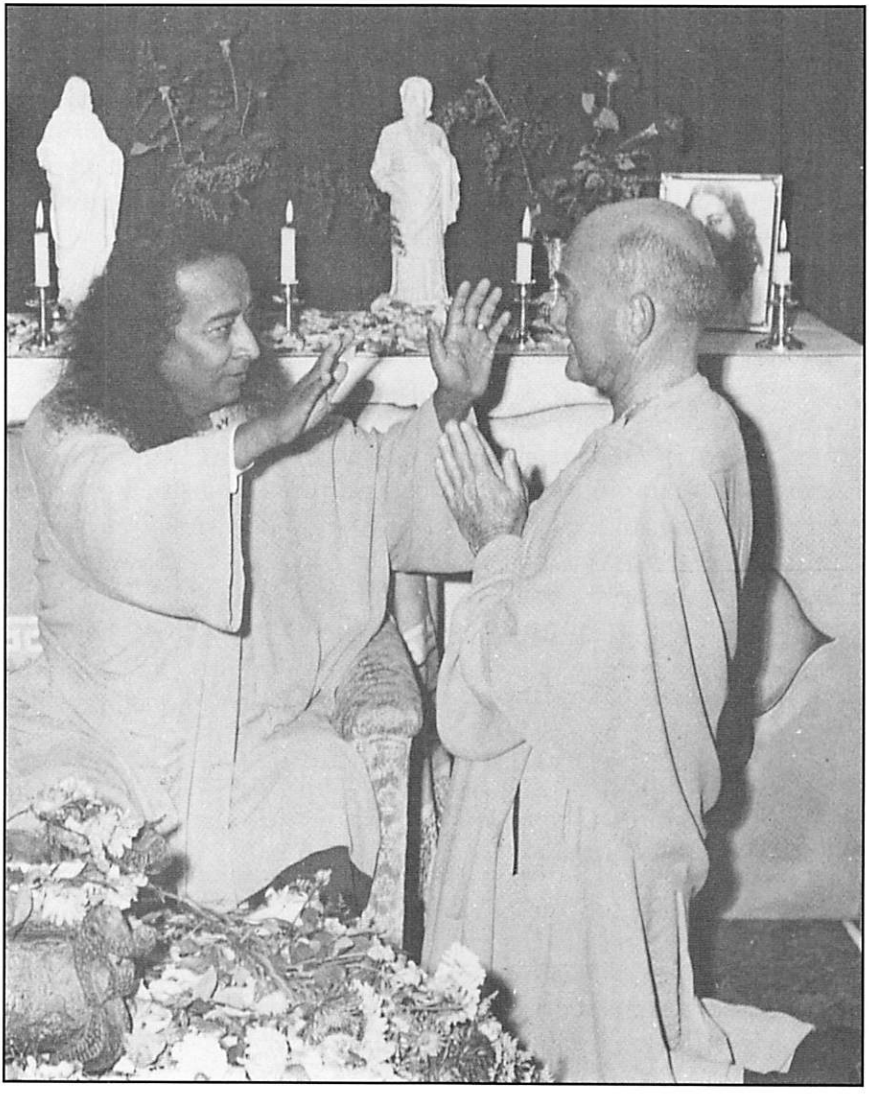
Are your daily activities well-ordered and purposeful or are they disorganized or not clearly defined or wisely intentional?

Do you alertly meditate every day?

Do you acknowledge and honor the spiritual essence of all people and all forms of life?

Are you always skillfully appropriate and effective in all of your relationships and actions?

> To declare that you are mentally or functionally weak or incompetent is to deny your innate potential to know and fulfill the highest purpose for your life.
> *– Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952)*



Paramahansa Yogananda blessing James J. Lynn when he announced that Mr. Lynn would succeed him as president of Self-Realization Fellowship.
August 25, 1951

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions, and Practices

Send questions, inquiries, or themes—which may be used in a future issue of this publication—by regular mail or to rd@csa-davis.org

Although I say I am committed to my spiritual path, I often let myself be distracted, am occasionally lazy, and make excuses for neglecting my studies and meditation practice. Even when I meditate, I sometime think about mundane matters or allow my attention to wander. How can I be intentional and focused?

Until you are always completely committed remember that your current incarnation will continue for only a few years and decide to use those years wisely. Learn to calm your mind and be alertly attentive to important matters. As a spiritual being you can be superior to your mind, feelings, and circumstances. Devote more time and attention to thinking about why you are in this world and what you can and will do to be as spiritually conscious and freely functional as possible.

I have known many people who were somewhat spiritually conscious but identified with their personality characteristics, mental states, and emotions. Learn to easily express through your personality while being an observer of what you perceive, do, and experience.

What are *siddhis* and should they be cultivated?

The Sanskrit word *siddhi* is defined as an exceptional power or ability to do something, also an accomplishment of a purpose. Some exceptional powers or abilities mentioned in *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras* include clairvoyance, cosmic awareness, having intuitive knowledge of what is examined, knowing the contents of other people's minds, ability to have desires and needs easily satisfied, invisibility, and being impervious to all influences.

Siddhis are considered as exceptional by people who are not yet conscious of their spiritual essence and innate knowledge.

The general advice to truth seekers is to avoid wanting or

trying to use exceptional abilities for egocentric purposes which would keep awareness confined, result in misfortune, or delay or interfere with spiritual awakening.

All of our abilities and skills can be used for life-enhancing purposes, to fulfill desires that are necessary to have to be able to live effectively, and to have relationships and environmental circumstances that are comfortable and supportive.

Necessary desires are not harmful or troublesome. Cravings that cannot be completely satisfied are to be avoided because they result in frustration and misuse of our mental powers and other resources. A basic discipline in all spiritual traditions is to avoid being greedy or strongly attached to things.

Highly developed intellectual and intuitive abilities should be used to understand higher realities and grow to emotional and spiritual maturity.

> By meditative contemplation on ultimate Reality supernatural powers of perception [can] emerge. If allowed to flow [entirely] outward, they can be obstacles to spiritual growth and to perfecting samadhi. Used wisely they are superior abilities that can resist, weaken, and remove subliminal [below the threshold of conscious awareness] and instinctual influences that blur awareness.
> *– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 3:37,38*

Does it matter if I prefer to believe in and pray to a form of God that I imagine and feel comfortable with?

Until we know what ultimate Reality is, our ideas about it are mental concepts.

Relate to the idea of ultimate Reality that enables you to have a vivid sense of relationship with it while being receptive to having insights that reveal what is true. Don't be afraid of what might be revealed from within your essence of being.

Want to know, rather than be a naive believer.

Ideas that most people have about God, saints, gurus, and enlightened men and women past and present are flawed.

How can we pray effectively?

The Latin origin of the word prayer is *precarious*, "to obtain [or try to obtain] by begging." Five common forms of prayer are:

- Confession: admission of mistakes, weaknesses, or failures after self-examination with sincere hope of forgiveness.
- Worship: contemplation for the purpose of communion. This is usually done when meditating.
- Petitioning: asking with hope of having a desired response.
- Praise: joyous recognition and acknowledgement of God's existence and appreciation for God's various manifestations and processes.
- Thanksgiving: expressing gratitude for fortunate events and circumstances that have been provided.

Petitioning prayer may be the most widely used by people who have unfulfilled desires, unsatisfied needs, problems that need to be solved, and/or want to intervene on behalf of others who need help of some kind. Petitioning prayers are said to be more effective when we are able to "believe" that what is prayed for is already provided or will soon be actual or real. That requires a change of viewpoint from wanting or needing to "having."

Why are some prayers effective and others are not?

Sometimes prayer seems to be effective because the desired results would have occurred even if we had not prayed. Also, after prayer we may intentionally or spontaneously do things that produce or attract ideal conditions.

What should we do when our prayers are not effective?

When our prayers don't produce or attract the results we want, we can learn to pray, or creatively act, more skillfully. When praying for others, their mental and emotional states, states of consciousness, and other influential conditions may determine their experiences.

Can we pray for others who have not asked for our prayers?

It is spiritually beneficial for us and for others to pray for the well-being of all people and all forms and processes of life. We should not try to control others or their circumstances.

One useful way to pray for others is to meditate until you are calmly established in awareness of your true nature and omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient ultimate Reality. Think of people you want to assist and include them in your illumined awareness. Sit still until you intuitively "feel" that everything is in divine order. Don't try to force anything to occur or to control what others do. Acknowledge one Reality that can and will provide ideal circumstances.

Can we ask a disembodied saint to heal or help us or others?

Regardless to what or to whom we pray, the process occurs in our own mind and consciousness. Our mind is a unit of one cosmic mind. Our consciousness is a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality. Asking real or imagined saints for help may be a way to improve our awareness of the wholeness of life or to have faith that ideal results will occur.

Affirm With Realization

I am consciously established in clear awareness of my pure spiritual essence and relationship with the Infinite.

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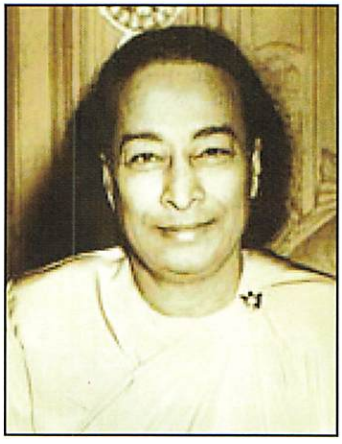
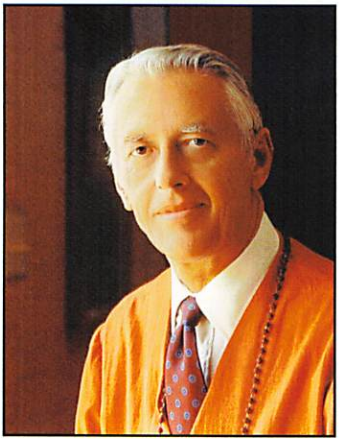


Paramahansa Yogananda



Roy Eugene Davis

Radiance

Published Quarterly for Kriya Yoga Initiates
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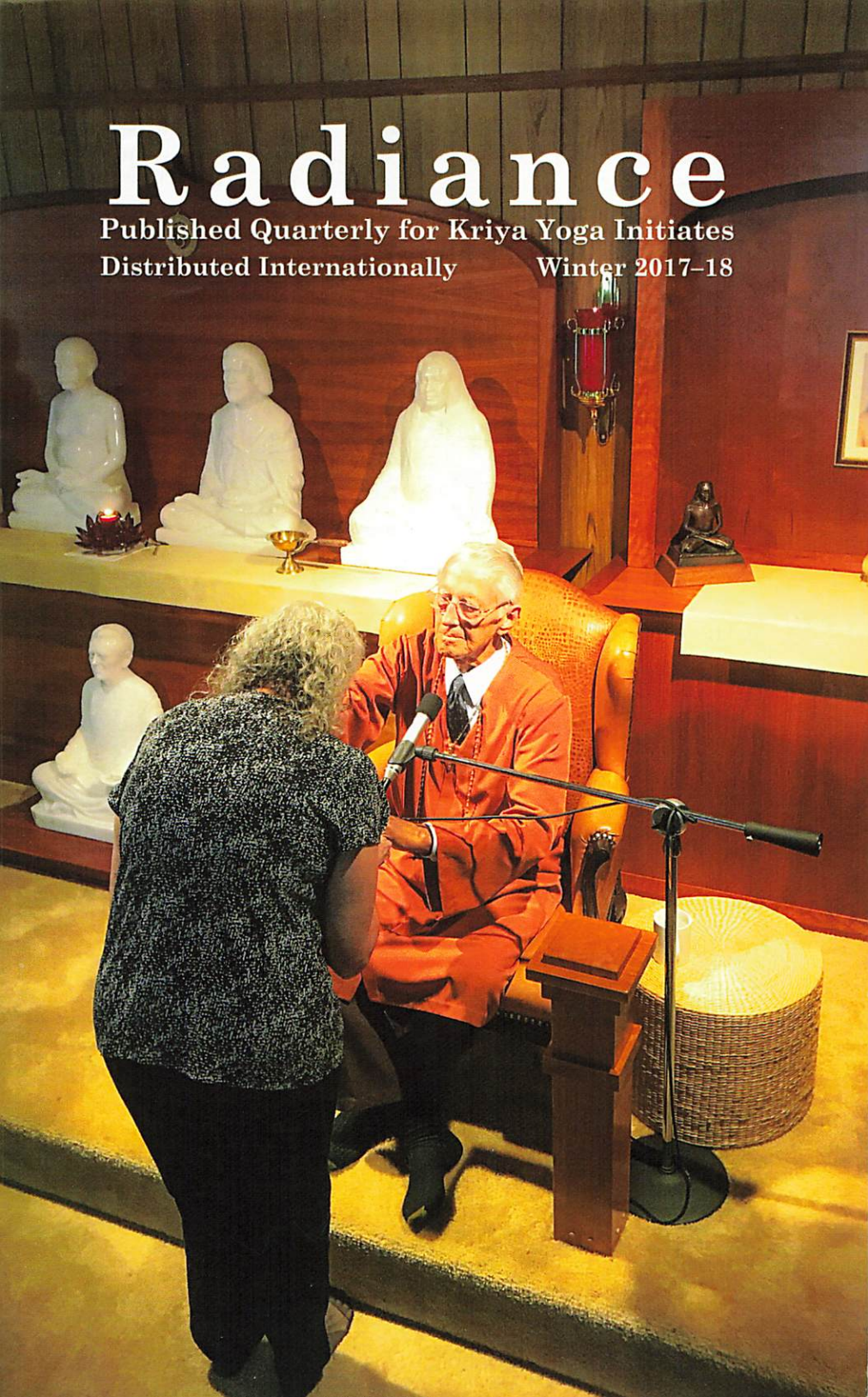

The first Self-Realization Fellowship Center in Phoenix, Arizona where I was the minister in 1952 and 1953. Master dedicated it in early October 1948. While he was in Phoenix he also presented a public lecture at a downtown auditorium. SRF now has a much larger temple in Phoenix on North Central Avenue.

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When the highest [furthest extent, ultimate] samadhi is realized, one can think, talk, and engage in useful activities without any loss of divine consciousness.
– Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952)

The Enduring Value of Attentive Cultivation of Transcendent Samadhi

samadhi From Sanskrit verb root *dha*, "to hold" + prefixes *a* + *sam*, "together completely." Firm holding together of attention and awareness with a meditative object or one's pure essence.

Samadhi is often mistakenly said to be extremely difficult to experience. Although it is not always easy to experience, right, attentive endeavor will bring forth satisfying results.

The following information from the second part of *Patanjali*'s *Yoga Sutras* describes the Yogic way to nurture samadhi states. Sutras are concisely worded "threads" of ideas or themes that can be contemplated until their meanings are fully understood. The meanings of some of the sutras are immediately evident, while others may be more easily comprehended when an insightful person's commentary is provided. Deeper understanding can be had during many months and years of study after the general meaning is known. Carefully examine these sutras even if you have already read them several times. Compare them with your meditative experiences and think about how your current and future meditation experiences might be improved.

1. An unwavering flow of attention is concentration.
2. Unwavering concentration on a meditative object is meditation.
3. The self-revealed object of meditative contemplation is samadhi.
4. Concentration, meditation, and samadhi practiced together result in complete identification of attention and awareness with what is contemplated.
5. Mastery of meditative contemplation provides insights into higher realities.
6. Meditative contemplation is [can be] practiced in stages.
7. The three practices [concentration, meditation, samadhi with an object of attention] are internal compared to the five preceding practices.

8. They become external when samadhi without the support of an object prevails.
9. The superior, constructive influences of that samadhi overcome- and neutralize restrictive subliminal tendencies.
10. The serene, transformative flow of superconscious influences isdue to its innate purity.
11. When attention and awareness are firmly established in that samadhi, all sense of "otherness" disappears.

The Sanskrit word for concentration, meditation, and samadhi combined is *sam* (together) *yama* (self-controlled).

The "five preceding practices" (number seven) prepare us to meditate effectively. 1. Avoiding immoral or harmful thoughts and behaviors. 2. Adherence to cleanliness, contentment, constructive thinking and behaviors, insightful examination of one's pure essence, and surrender of egocentric identification in order to awaken to higher realities. 3. Comfortably sitting still to meditate. 4. Pranayama (having life forces flow freely with or without controlled breathing). 5. Internalization of attention (having it withdrawn from external conditions).

Notice the emphasis on superconscious perceptions rather than on being overly involved with the enjoyment of sensory stimulation (*bhoga*) or of deep sleep (*nidra*). What is sometimes humorously referred to as *nidra* (sleep) *samadhi* isn't the same as *yoga-nidra*: controlled practice of restful borderline sleep during which one is alertly aware.

Patanjali described samadhi as awareness withdrawn from external conditions. When the samadhi of Self-realization is superior to all mental modifications and other states of consciousness, one is fully enlightened while expressing through the mind and physical body. That stage is sometimes referred to as *sahaja* (natural, innate, spontaneous) samadhi that is expressed when limiting conditions have been transcended or are absent. Meditative samadhi is purifying when regularly experienced. Fully conscious spontaneous samadhi can allow us to live freely while relating to everyday conditions.

Stages of Meditative Samadhi

Practicing meditative contemplation in stages (number six) can help a person to be alertly aware of what is experienced and to choose to proceed to contemplation and experience of more refined samadhi states. The stages of meditative samadhi are described in the Raja Yoga system (also referred to as "eight-limbed" because of five preparatory practices and three stages of meditative contemplation). They are supported by objects of perception, such as subjective light, sound, pleasant feelings, Self-awareness, or whatever else may be contemplated. A fifth stage is without the support of such perceptions.

1. *Debate.* At this stage, because awareness is influenced by wavelike movements (*vrittis*) in awareness and the mind, one can be inclined to wonder if the experience is authentic, what to do about it, and what might yet occur. Preoccupation with this stage is to be avoided by proceeding to the next one.

2. *Investigation.* Calm examination of what occurs that results in meaningful insights and effortless emergence of innate Self-knowledge and knowledge of higher realities. At this stage it can be helpful to be curious about what can be known and experienced, and proceed with an attitude of alert expectation of worthwhile discovery.

3. *Bliss.* Pure joyousness or exhilaration (soul happiness) due to increased Self-awareness and experience of freedom from former conditions that blurred and confined awareness. The pure, refined bliss (*ananda*) of Self-awareness is not a surge of emotion, as can be known when it is experienced. Enlightened gurus (spiritual teachers) encourage disciples to "go beyond" the first three stages to the fourth stage which is a "door" to liberation of consciousness and not succumb to the temptation to stay at early stages.

   One might be inclined to think that what is learned or experienced should be used to impress others or to be a teacher or healer before one is competent enough to do those things.

Or there may be an urge to try to have exceptional powers of perception and extraordinary functional abilities to accomplish egocentric purposes. Such powers and abilities (*siddhis*) should not be used to express egocentric tendencies. They *can* be used for life-enhancing purposes and for nurturing Self-realization.

4. *Self-revelation.* When all mental and emotional processes are completely calm, one's pure essence is revealed. At this stage it is helpful to maintain a balance of patience (calm, soul contentment) and alert expectation. The compelling urge at the innermost level of being clarifies awareness to the extent that what has always been, is, and will forever be whole, complete, and free is directly experienced. The illuminating experience is *direct* because our essence is not by caused or supported by an external influence or perceived with our intellect, intuition, mind, or emotions.

The following sutras in part three of Patanjali's text describe how attentive meditation can be used to discern the essence of things, improve intellectual and intuitive abilities, awaken to Self-realization, and know ultimate Reality and its attributes that produce and sustain universes.

35. By contemplation on the heart [pure essence], direct knowledge of it is revealed.
36. By contemplation on the self-existence of consciousness, the difference between it and modified states of awareness is known.

The Culmination of Attentive Meditative Contemplation

The furthest extent of spiritual awakening is permanent realization (awareness, experience, and knowing) of our pure essence which is a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality, realization described as great (*maha*) transcendent aloneness (*kaivalya*). Until it is had, a truth seeker who is still somewhat egocentric may be uncomfortable with the idea of awakening to that stage. The thought may arise, "What will happen to my sense of I-ness and the personality with which I have been iden-

tified for so long?" "How will my life change and how will I know what to do?"

The following story somewhat illustrates the reluctance to be completely enlightened that a person who is uncertain about the effects of future spiritual growth might have:

A man whose body was made of salt was near an ocean. While looking at it, the thought came into his mind, "I wonder what it would be like to go into that ocean?" Curious, he walked into the water until it covered shoulders. In a few moments, when he felt his body dissolving in the water, he hastily returned to the safety of the shore, saying, "I didn't want to become the ocean, I only wanted to examine it!"

With complete spiritual enlightenment you will have a purified awareness of self-identity which enables you to interact with others, express through personality characteristics, and relate to events and circumstances. You will make wise choices about how you live, what you do, and with whom you regularly associate. You will always know what to do in every situation.

People who don't know that you are spiritually awake will see you as a decent, kind, emotionally mature, balanced person whose characteristics and behaviors are worthy of emulating. You, inwardly fully conscious of your true nature and the infinite ultimate Reality and its processes, will live easily and effectively do what you are best qualified to do.

Being spiritually enlightened doesn't mean that you must write about your experiences or endeavor to teach others the facts of life that you know. If you know it to be best for you to work at an ordinary job, start or manage a business, be a school teacher, computer programmer, pilot, doctor, lawyer, or do any other thing that is useful, do it well. There, you can skillfully and effectively express your knowledge, skills, and abilities

As your purified awareness silently blends with the collective consciousness of all life on our planet, everyone and everthing will be benefited while your essence will not be changed.

Because samadhi can be experienced when the mind is very calm, cultivate mental calmness and emotional stability. Learn

to be established in Self-contentment regardless of mundane circumstances. Avoid relying on everyday events and personal experiences for your happiness and sense of well-being. Learn to be happy and optimistic from the inside.

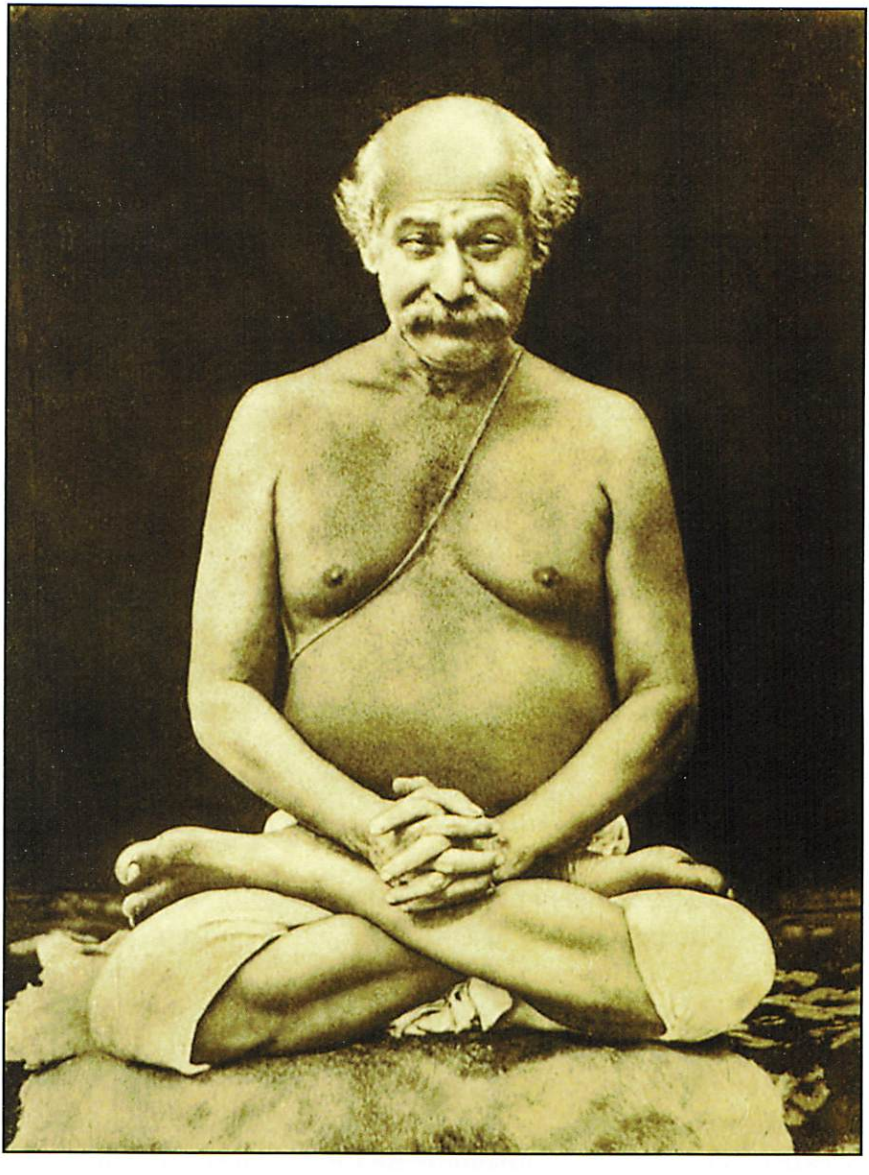
Avoid irrational emotional reactions to unexpected events or unpleasant or unwanted circumstances. Move easily in the world without strong attachments to outer conditions or fear of observing them and appropriately relating to them when it is necessary. A few of my brother disciples who our guru said were spiritually advanced were competent business executives.

Adhere to wholesome, constructive lifestyle regimens to be as healthy as possible. Maintain ideal body weight, exercise on a regular schedule, eat nutritious food, obtain adequate sleep, and have regular schedules of creative activity and deep rest.

Continue to acquire useful knowledge that enables you to live skillfully and experience rapid spiritual awakening. Learn to comprehend philosophical concepts and the reasons for doing certain things to enhance your awareness and bring forth your innate qualities and knowledge of higher realities—the essence or subtle principles that determine what occurs in our three-dimensional realm. Example: reading this Lesson during one month will bring forth new insights and enable you to comprehend the theme more fully. When you understand what occurs when you experience progressive stages of superconsciousness, your meditations will be more satisfying and illuminating.

Meditate superconsciously every day, being attentive to the beneficial changes that occur and the clarity of awareness that you have.

Until you are always established in Self-realization, aspire to be fully enlightened and think and live in ways that allow your awakening to quickly occur.



Lahiri Mahasaya, guru of Swami Sri Yukteswar
September 30, 1828 – September 26, 1895

Dialogue

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions, and Practices

Send questions, inquiries, or themes—which may be used in a future issue of this publication—by regular mail or to rd@csa-davis.org

Can anyone experience samadhi or can only a special few people have it?

Anyone can experience transcendent, pure samadhi when their mind is very calm and movements in their awareness are quieted. Preliminary meditative samadhi doesn't have to be experienced by everyone, nor does everyone have the ability to skillfully concentrate when they are meditating.

Some people are able to have pure states of consciousness because of their devotion, use of rituals to calm the mind and emotions, or effective use of discriminative intelligence. Others experience spontaneous spiritual awakening.

Transcendent samadhi is the result of the unveiling of the innate purity of our essence. It should not be thought of as a "high" state to attain or to be produced by mantras, positive thinking, drugs, special foods, or unique spiritual practices.

When we are Self-realized while we are embodied we can be cosmic conscious and live freely.

Buddhist traditions emphasize the purity of our essence by teaching that people and creatures have a *buddha* ("awake") nature. About 1,700 years ago, in India, a man who told others about his enlightenment experiences was called a buddha, a fully Self-aware person. In nondualistic philosophical systems the same view is taught: souls are defined as individualized units of the pure essence of ultimate Reality (*Brahman*). Because the essence of ultimate Reality is pure, its units are pure. That is why many spiritually enlightened people teach that Self-realization is easy to have when attention and awareness are identified with one's pure essence. It is not easy to have when attention and awareness are strongly identified with a mistaken sense of self, mental and emotional states, and external conditions.

Can a person be assisted to have a samadhi experience?

Samadhi, or at least a more clarified state of consciousness and expanded awareness, can sometimes result by being in the presence of a person whose spiritual energies are aroused or in an environment where spiritually enlightened people live, or formerly lived. It may also occur when a spiritually conscious person can share energy (*shakti*) with will power, intention, or by touching with a hand. One has to be receptive to receiving help that is offered. After having an awakening experience, it is necessary to live constructively, acquire more knowledge of higher realities, aspire to be enlightened, cultivate humility*, and nurture spiritual growth.

*Humility is indicated by lack of *egotism* [an inflated sense of importance of an illusional or flawed self-identity). Letting go of or rising above a mistaken sense of self clarifies awareness and allows being spiritually conscious easier.

Is it useful to sit facing the east to have the beneficial influences of magnetic currents or sit on a wool or silk cloth to insulate the body from "earth" forces?

Some people say it can be useful to face east during prayer or meditation to be beneficially influenced by electromagnetic currents that flow from east to west, as Earth turns eastward during a twenty-four hour day. They say doing this can help to balance the body's life forces and improve concentration.

Sitting on a wool or silk cloth, or using it as a shawl, is said to insulate one's body from the effects of "earth currents." Many years ago yogis who meditated in caves or sat on the ground, were advised to sit on a thick blanket placed over dry grass to insulate them from moist, cold ground. Doing that would enable them to be more comfortable and healthy.

One of my brother disciples, who our guru said was a proficient meditator, said, "New meditators usually don't notice a difference when they do those things, and for skillful meditators it doesn't make any difference."

What is emotional maturity and how can it make our spiritual awakening easier?

It is broadly defined as ability to understand and manage our emotions and have the kind of life and circumstances we want to have. It "allows" spiritual growth to be easier because of the absence of many psychological conditions that interfere with it as well as blur our awareness and weaken intellectual and intuitive abilities.

Some characteristics of emotional maturity are:

- Adaptability: able to think and act creatively instead of maintaining rigid ways of thinking and behaving.
- Willing to be responsible for one's thoughts, moods, actions, and their effects.
- Imaginative: able to mentally "see" possibilities for improved experiences and circumstances and do what is necessary to have them actualized.
- Desire and willingness to learn what one needs to learn and to wisely use what is learned.
- Resilience: the capacity to be calm and objective in difficult situations and to quickly recover from hardship or misfortune without being traumatized (psychologically harmed).
- Calmness: nurtured by cultivating Self-contentment. This enables spiritual growth to more easily occur. Self-contentment is not dependent on external events or emotional states; it is natural when we are established in awareness of our essence of being.
- Optimism: expecting ideal outcomes for plans, projects, and emerging events. It strengthens the body's immune system and empowers creative thinking and effective actions.
- Comfortable relating to others. Being able to harmoniously communicate and helpfully interact with others contributes to the well-being of everyone and supports the social order.
- Self-reliance: empowered by Self-awareness and knowledge of our relationship with the Infinite rather than a shallow or personality-oriented sense of self.

Emotionally mature people are:

- Large-minded, curious, and like to be well-informed.
- Aspire to be fully Self-realized and to comprehend ultimate Reality as it is.
- Are adventuresome and courageous, make wise decisions, and perform effective actions.
- Learn from their choices, actions, intellectual mistakes, and flawed behaviors. With each right choice and successful action they become stronger, wiser, and more competent.

Emotionally immature people are inclined to:

- Be small-minded, biased, have petty thoughts, changeable moods, and like to have friends and companions who think and act in similar ways.
- Cling to a small, confined sense of self-identity and believe in a human-like god viewed as a cosmic father or mother.
- Think that ultimate Reality cannot be known and think and behave like small children in relationship to it.
- Are mentally and emotionally unstable, insecure, unwilling or afraid to make decisions, and don't control their thoughts, moods, and behaviors.
- Don't always "see" the relationships between their choices and actions and their effects. They may think that luck, insufficient education, unknown karmic conditions, or "unfriendly" planetary influences determine their experiences.

I have forgotten how to practice some of the meditation methods that were taught when I was initiated a few years ago. How can I learn them again?

If you have a copy of my book *A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice*, which we give to every new kriya initiate, read the first chapters to learn to do the basic meditation methods and kriya pranayama. If you don't have a copy, request it from the CSA office. Send $3.00 for packing and postage in the U.S. You can also learn them again at our meditation retreats. Use them on a regular schedule and you won't forget how to do it.

When I try to meditate my thoughts keep moving rapidly in my mind and my attention wavers from one thing to another. What can I do to solve this problem?

To solve the problem of mental restlessness and inability to concentrate be intentional and alert. Use meditation methods and techniques that require your attentiveness, such as prayer, affirmation, breath awareness, mantra, kriya pranayama, and meditating on [in] the OM vibration. Avoid passive waiting for something to happen. Be involved until you are very calm and inward, then disregard methodical practices and endeavor to be aware of your pure essence.

I am getting older and sometimes fear that I won't be able to be as spiritually conscious as I want to be as the years go by. How should I view this situation? How can I be more conscious and spiritually fulfilled?

Calmly continue to learn about your true nature and aspire to clearly know it. When meditating, dissolve in the Infinite, unbounded, unlimited consciousness. At all other times, remember that, because you are an immortal, spiritual being, you are destined to be fully Self-realized.

Among many philosophical concepts, lifestyle regimens, and spiritual practices, how can we know what to choose and do?

People emphasize what they experienced and/or what they think will be helpful to others. Some teach a direct way suited to the needs of truth seekers, their psychological characteristics, and ability to practice. Some mix information with traditional ideas. Use your intelligence and common sense to discern what is helpful when examining what others say or do.

The Sanskrit word for individual self-endeavor is *sadhana*, from the verb root *sadh*, "to go straight to the final goal or stage of awakening."

Several ways to be Self-realized have been taught in various cultures for many centuries.

- Right faith (confidence that one will succeed with effective endeavors), right knowledge, and right conduct.
- Buddhism teaches "the eightfold path": right views, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right endeavor, right mindfulness, and right contemplation. The Indian sage whose disciples acknowledged as being "fully awake" practiced various forms of Yoga before his enlightenment. Because of his fervent aspiration to be Self-realized he began by fasting and meditating for many hours. When he realized that what he was doing weakened his body and mental powers, he chose what he later described as "the middle way" of moderation while focused on essential practices.
- Using discriminative intelligence to know the relationships between ultimate Reality, the cosmos, and life processes.
- Intensive (extremely focused) examination of philosophical concepts and the causes, categories, and orderly processes of cosmic manifestation until liberating knowledge emerges.
- Ritual actions leading to effective spiritual practice and the unveiling of innate Self-knowledge.
- Constant Self-remembrance along with increasing awareness of living in the ocean of one Reality.
- All useful spiritual practices are described in the classical Yoga systems. *Bhakti Yoga* is the way of devotion to ultimate Reality as it is known or imagined, along with cultivating and expressing love and compassion. *Karma Yoga* is emphasis on constructive, purposeful living without strong attachment to one's actions or pride in what is accomplished. *Jnana* (gyana) *Yoga* is emphasis on having higher knowledge and wisely using it as needed. *Raja Yoga* emphasizes ethical conduct, disciplined thinking and behaviors, sitting to meditate, having one's vital forces balanced, inwardness of attention, and meditative concentration and contemplation to the stage of samadhi.

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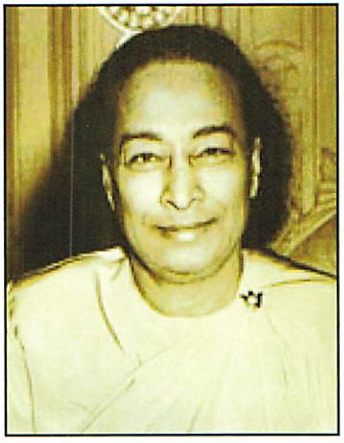
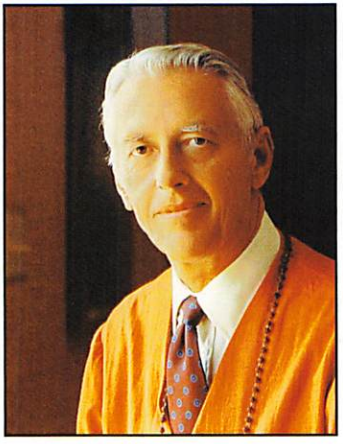


Paramahansa Yogananda



Roy Eugene Davis